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NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR
STORY AND ART BY SHIN MASHIBA
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YUMEKUI KENBUN

# NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR

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ISBN 13: 978-1-4215-2226-5

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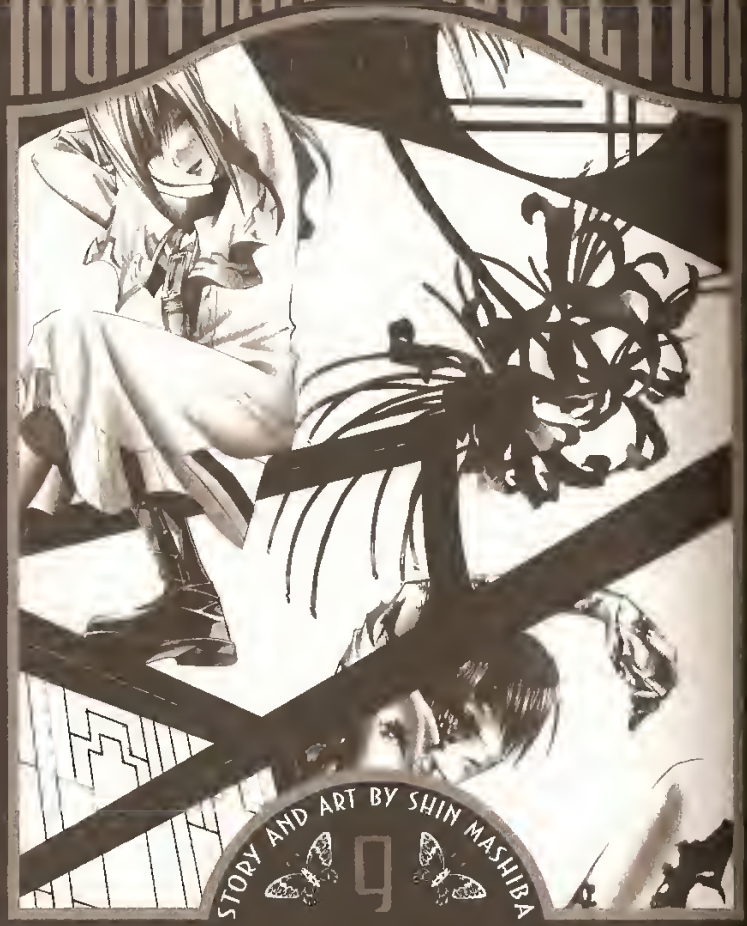
YUMEKUI KENBUN

# NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR



STORY AND ART BY SHIN MASHIBA

9

## RETURN

# The Fifty-Seventh Night: Reunion

YUMEKUI KENBUN

# NIGHTMARE INSPECTOR

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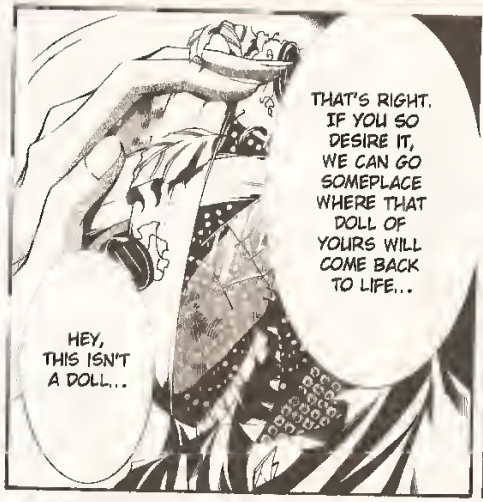
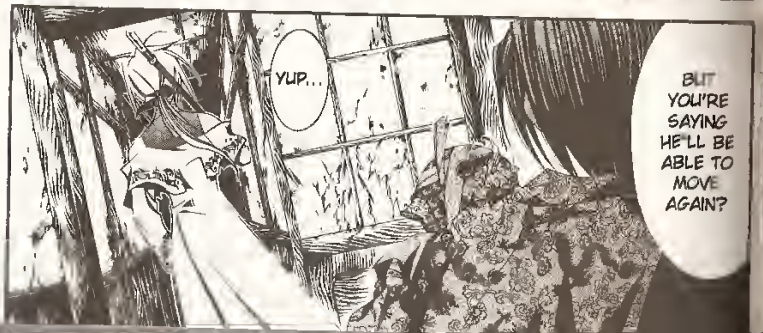
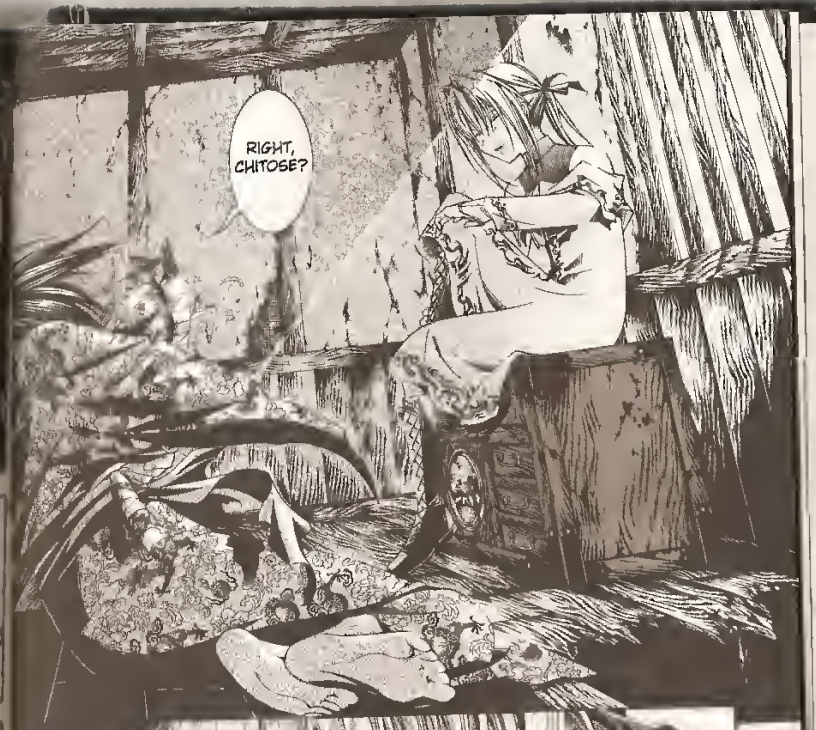
I SEE... YOU'RE SCARED AND IN PAIN...
...CHITOSE.

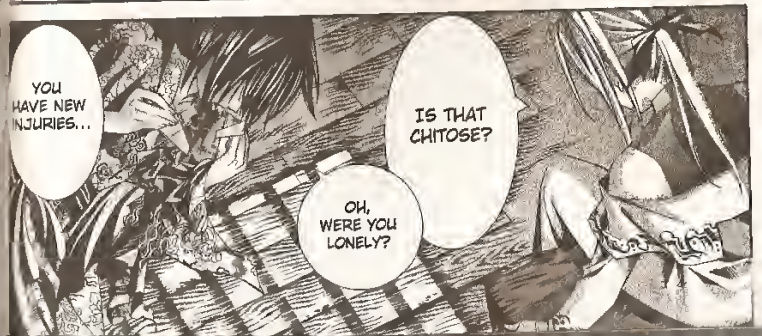

THAT'S RIGHT. IF YOU SO DESIRE IT, WE CAN GO SOMEPLACE WHERE THAT DOLL OF YOURS WILL COME BACK TO LIFE...
HEY, THIS ISN'T A DOLL...

...

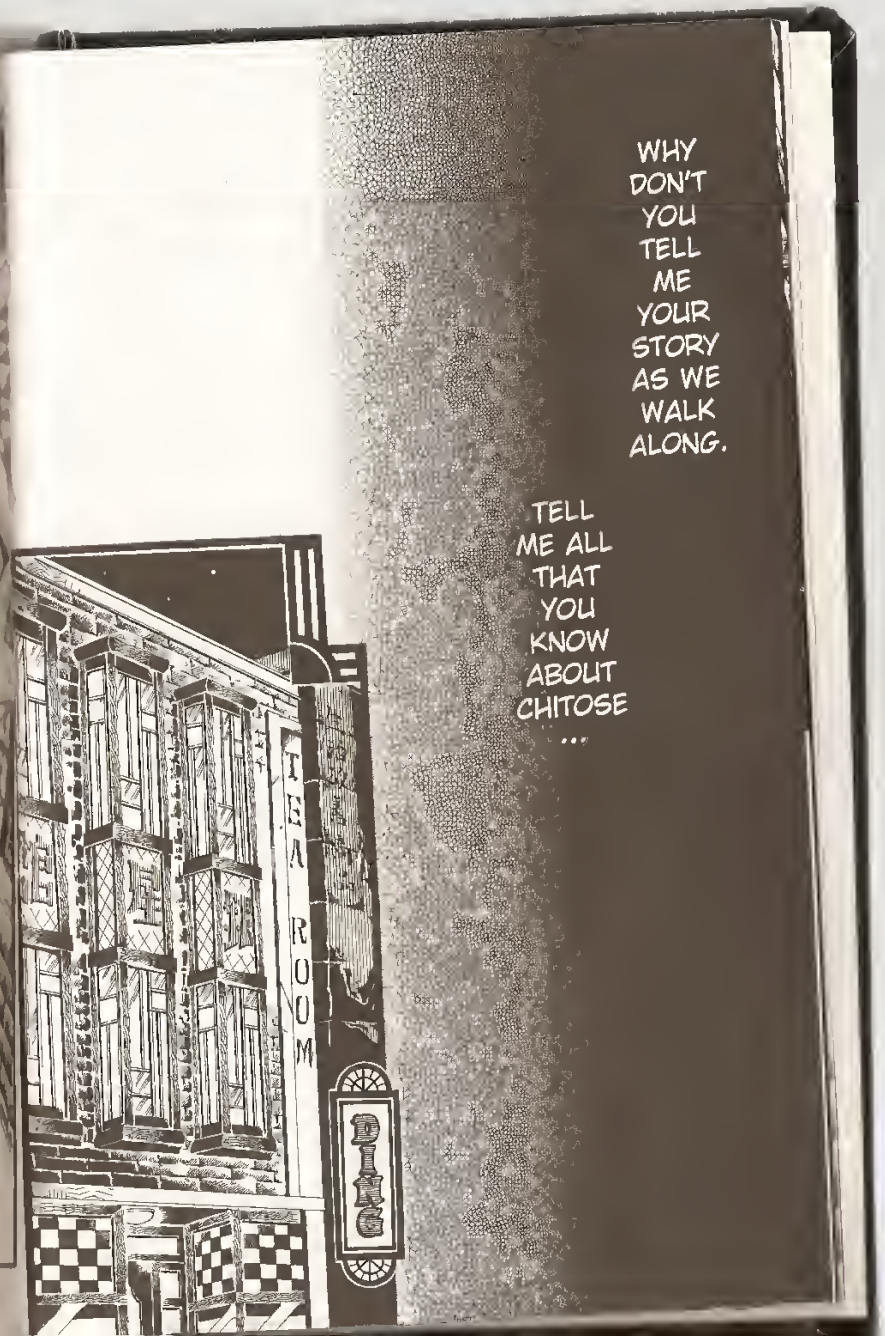
LEAD YOU...?
HEH HEH. I'VE FOUND SOMEONE THAT CAN LEAD ME TO HIM

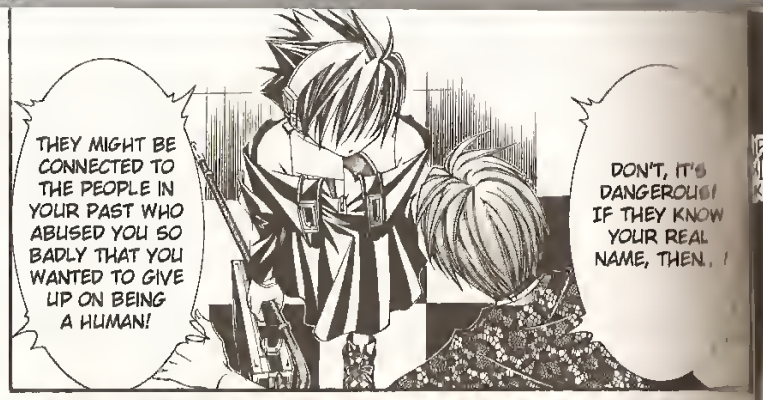

YUP...
BUT YOU'RE SAYING HE'LL BE ABLE TO MOVE AGAIN?

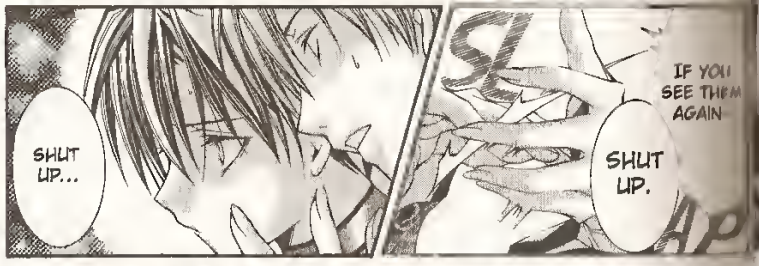

RIGHT, CHITOSE?
FINALLY! I'VE COME ACROSS SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ABOUT HIS PAST.
...
CHITOSE, HUH...


YOU HAVE NEW INJURIES...
IS THAT CHITOSE?
OH, WERE YOU LONELY?

OH, DO YOU KNOW EACH OTHER?
YES, HE TAKES CARE OF THE OWNER OF THE DELIRIUM
OH HEY, IT'S SHIMA.
SO, WHAT'S GOING ON?
WELL...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT MYSELF, BUT THERE WAS A VISITOR WHO SAYS SHE WANTS TO MAKE A DOLL MOVE.
THEN THE PERSON WHO CAME WITH HER SAID THAT WE SHOULD BRING THE REAL THING FROM THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE...
BUT KAIRI SAYS HE CAN'T MAKE IT MOVE AND HE WON'T TAKE HER TO A ROOM.
I WONDER WHO THIS PERSON IS...

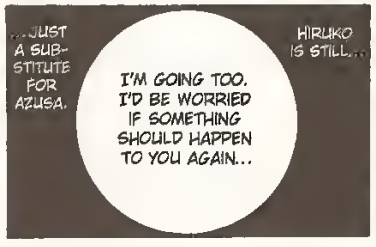

TEA ROOM
DING
WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME YOUR STORY AS WE WALK ALONG.
TELL ME ALL THAT YOU KNOW ABOUT CHITOSE ...

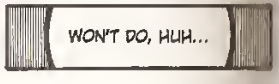

THEY MIGHT BE CONNECTED TO THE PEOPLE IN YOUR PAST WHO ABUSED YOU SO BADLY THAT YOU WANTED TO GIVE UP ON BEING A HUMAN!
DON'T, IT'S DANGEROUS! IF THEY KNOW YOUR REAL NAME, THEN...!


SHUT UP...
IF YOU SEE THEM AGAIN—
SHUT UP.

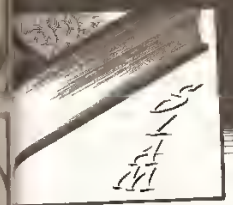
IT WON'T DO IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO HIRUKO.

THEN I'M COMING TOO.


...JUST A SUB-STITUTE FOR AZUSA.
I'M GOING TOO. I'D BE WORRIED IF SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO YOU AGAIN...
HIRUKO IS STILL...


WON'T DO, HUH...

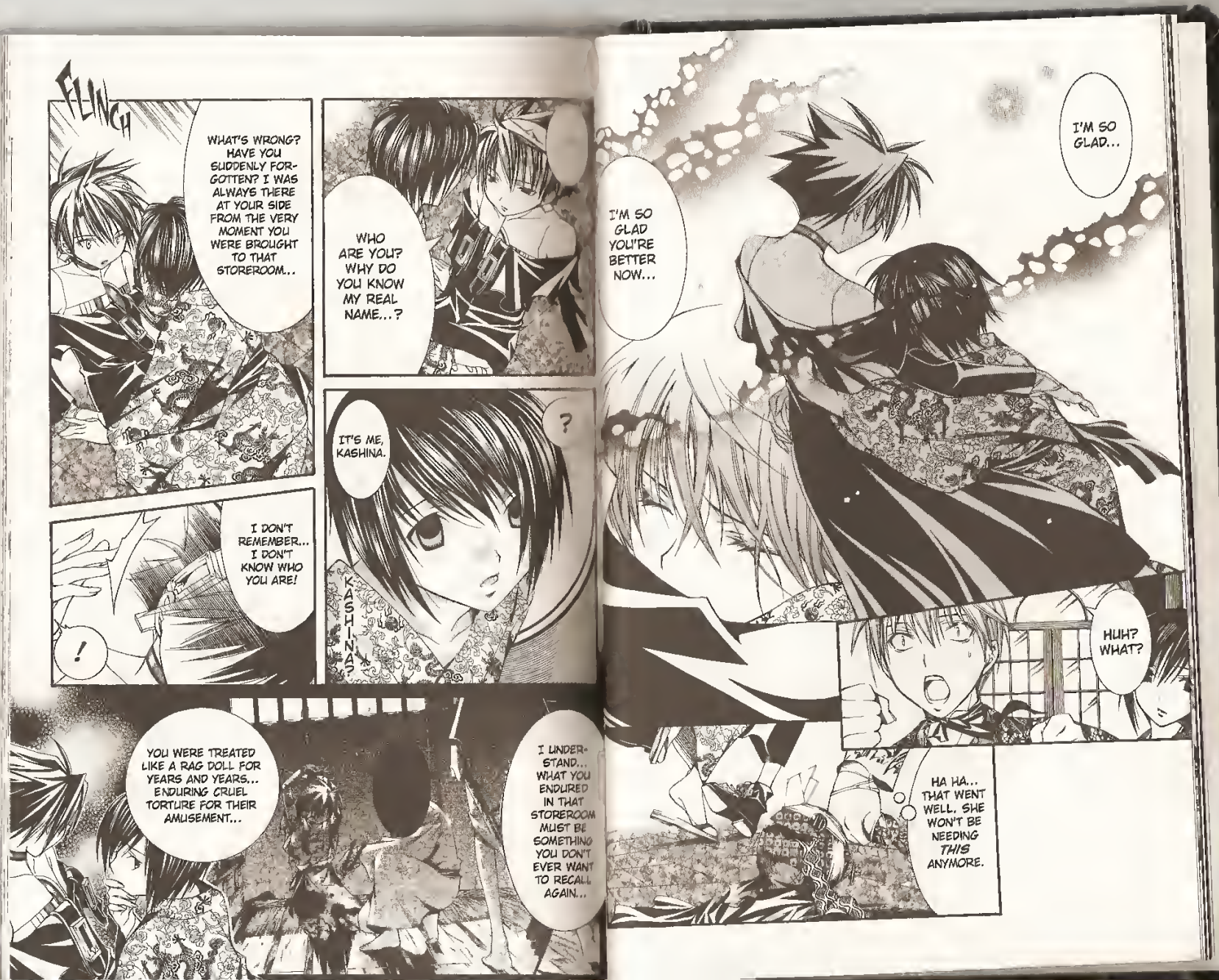
PERSON THER...! KISHIRO!
WHAT IS HE...

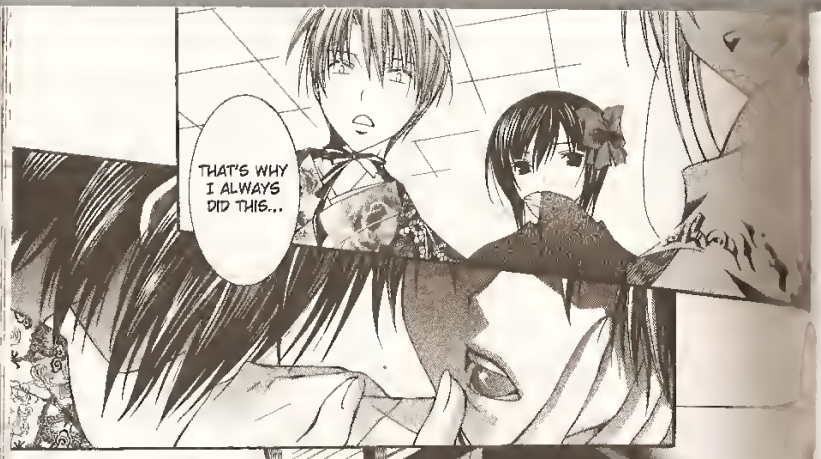


HE'LL START TROUBLE EVEN IF WE IGNORE HIM..
CHATTER
HEY! ARE YOU GONNA GO?

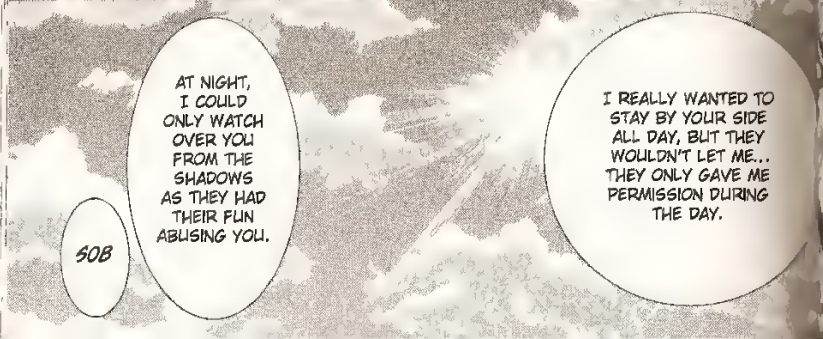
BABOP
SOMEONE CALLED "CHITOSE."

YOU SAID IF I CAME HERE, YOU COULD BRING THIS BACK TO LIFE...
I HAVE TO LOOK GOOD IN FRONT OF MIZUKI! I'LL PROTECT HIRUKO!
HEY, HOW MUCH LONGER AM I SUPPOSED TO WAIT?
CLACK
CHI...
...TOSE...
IT CAME TRUE! YOU CAN MOVE NOW.
HIRUKO, IS THIS GUY ALSO...
OH, I'M JUST TAGGING ALONG. THERE'S SOMETHING I WANTED TO CONFIRM AS WELL...
YES, HE'S THE BAKU TSUKISHIRO. SO WHY ARE YOU HERE?
SPEAKING OF WHICH, THERE'S SOMEBODY I WANT YOU TO MEET. IT TOOK ME A LOT OF TIME TO TRACK HER DOWN.


FLINCH
WHAT'S WRONG? HAVE YOU SUDDENLY FORGOTTEN? I WAS ALWAYS THERE AT YOUR SIDE FROM THE VERY MOMENT YOU WERE BROUGHT TO THAT STOREROOM...
WHO ARE YOU? WHY DO YOU KNOW MY REAL NAME...?
I DON'T REMEMBER... I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE!
!
IT'S ME, KASHINA.
?
KASHINA?
YOU WERE TREATED LIKE A RAG DOLL FOR YEARS AND YEARS... ENDURING CRUEL TORTURE FOR THEIR AMUSEMENT...
I UNDERSTAND... WHAT YOU ENDURED IN THAT STOREROOM MUST BE SOMETHING YOU DON'T EVER WANT TO RECALL AGAIN...
I'M SO GLAD...
I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE BETTER NOW...
HUH? WHAT?
HA HA... THAT WENT WELL. SHE WON'T BE NEEDING THIS ANYMORE.


THAT'S WHY I ALWAYS DID THIS...

ON SNOWY DAYS, I KEPT YOU WARM...
I TREATED YOUR WOUNDS EVERY DAY...
I WIPED YOUR BODY CLEAN...


AT NIGHT, I COULD ONLY WATCH OVER YOU FROM THE SHADOWS AS THEY HAD THEIR FUN ABUSING YOU.
SOB
I REALLY WANTED TO STAY BY YOUR SIDE ALL DAY, BUT THEY WOULDN'T LET ME... THEY ONLY GAVE ME PERMISSION DURING THE DAY.

BECAUSE I LIKE YOU, CHITOSE...
YOU ARE SO PRECIOUS TO ME, CHITOSE...
BUT, PLEASE... DON'T FORGET ME ALONG WITH THOSE MEMORIES!

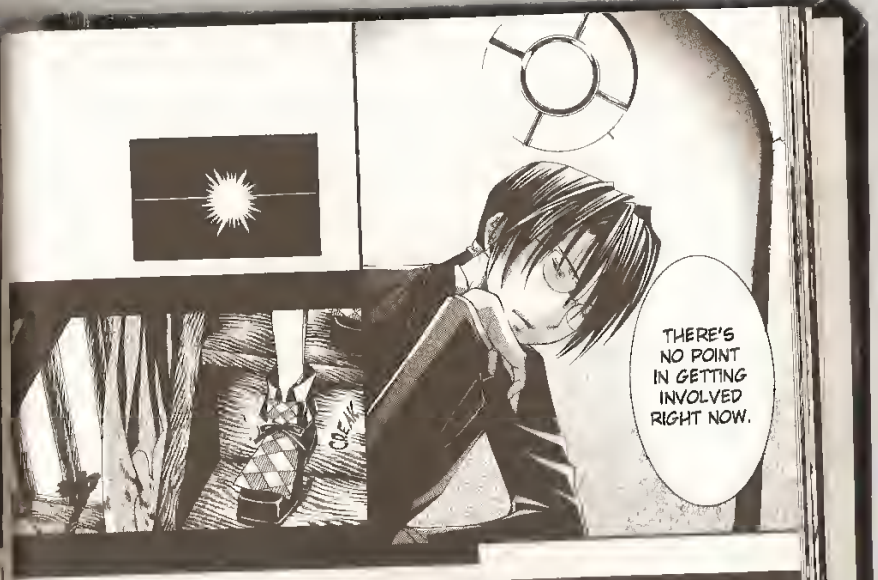
I'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN YOU. NOT EVEN FOR A MOMENT.
HEY, ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T KNOW HER?!
I WAS ALWAYS BY YOUR SIDE. I THOUGHT OF YOU SO MUCH I EVEN DREAMT OF YOU.
IF WHAT SHE SAYS IS TRUE, YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE NOW IF IT WEREN'T FOR HER.
THEN, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A LOOK AT HER DREAM, HIRUKO?
WHAT?

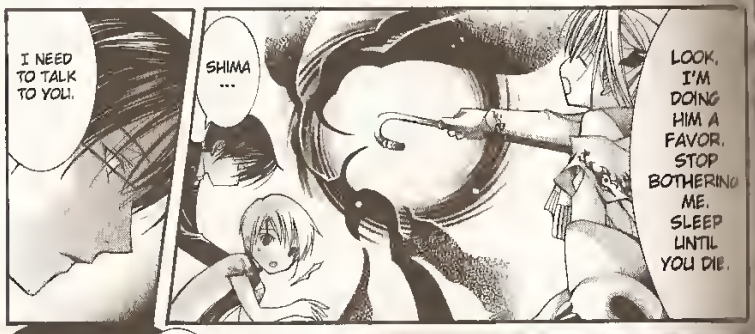
SHE... SHE TOOK CARE OF CHITOSE...
I'M SORRY... I'M SO SORRY...
THIS WARMTH ...
I DON'T REMEMBER THIS...
I DON'T KNOW YOU.
BUT YOU'RE ALL RIGHT NOW... I'LL WIPE AWAY ALL OF YOUR PAIN, CHITOSE...

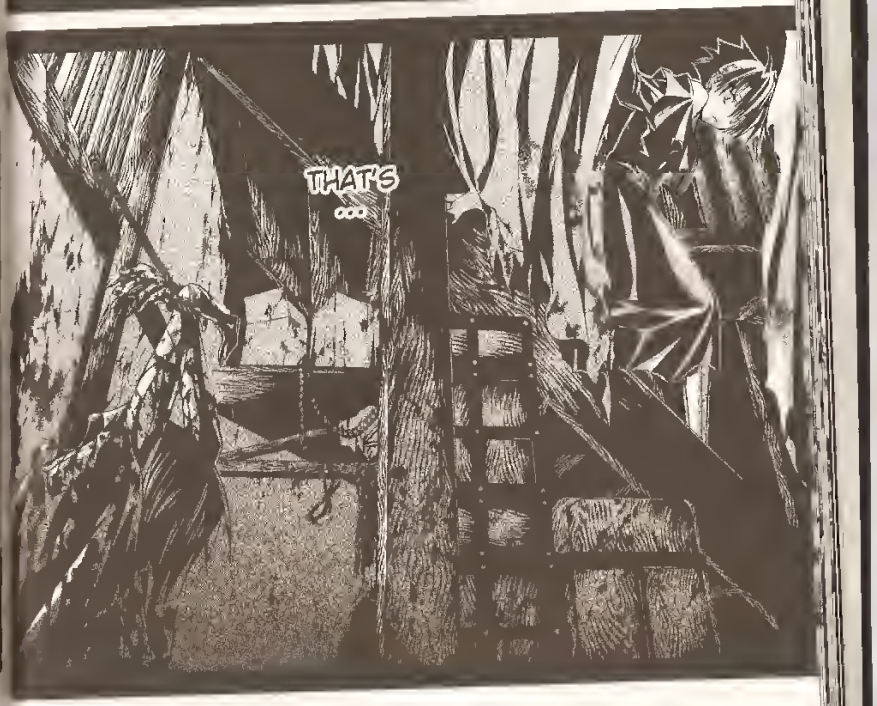
!
HIFUMI, GET AWAY FROM THAT GIRL!
THEN I GUESS YOUR FRIEND HERE WILL HAVE TO GO FIND OUT INSTEAD.
OH REALLY. AND HERE I WAS DOING YOU A FAVOR..
SLEEP NOW ... LEAVE THIS WORLD BEHIND.
HUH?
THAT'S WHY, WHEN SHE WAS SEPARATED FROM YOU, SHE TRANSFERRED HER FEELINGS FOR YOU TO THIS DOLL.
SHE CARED FOR YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF HER HEART.
YOU CAN FIND OUT IN HER DREAM WHY PART OF YOUR MEMORIES ARE MISSING.
KASHINA PROBABLY KNOWS YOU BETTER THAN YOU KNOW YOURSELF.
NO. NOT AT ALL.
WHAT? YOU'RE NOT CURIOUS ABOUT IT AT ALL?
I DON'T CARE.
PART OF MY MEMORIES ARE MISSING...

FINE THEN.
K-KAIRI, WHO IS THIS PERSON?! HE'S ROPED HIFUMI IN TOO!
SHIMA ...
THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'LL HAVE TO GO INTO THE DREAM AND WAKE THEM UP.
IT'S THE SAME AS LAST TIME.
WHAT A SHAME. THERE'S NO POINT IN IT UNLESS YOU GO.
Tchi
FLACK
FOOSH
A DREAM ABOUT ME...

# The Fifty-Eighth Night: Memory



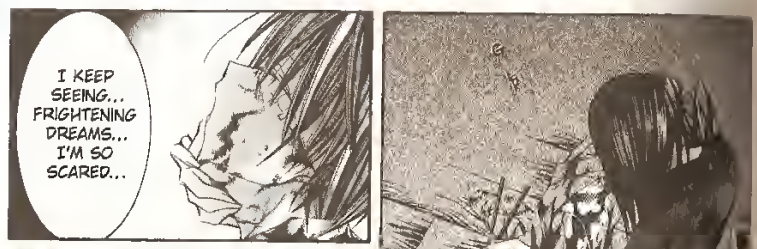



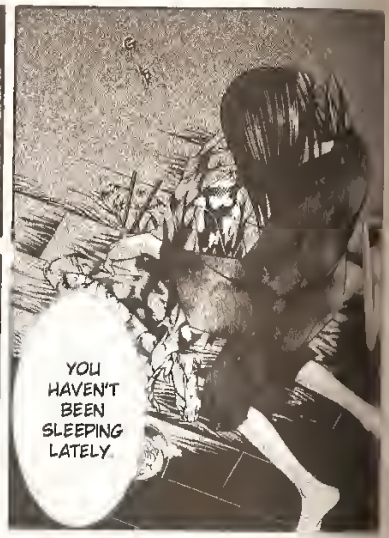
MY OLDER SISTER WILL FIND ME SOONER OR LATER. SHE'S A BRAVE, KIND PERSON...
OLDER SISTER?!
KASHINA ..
"YOU ARE PRECIOU TO MI CHIT
LET'S SEE HOW IT GOES... IF IT EASES HER PAINFUL MEMORIES ...
IT'S OKAY.
IT MUST BE SO HARD TO EAT WITH YOUR TEETH LIKE THAT.
AS YOUR ONLY RELATIVE, I'M SURE SHE WILL.
BUT YOU'RE SO BATTERED.
WAITING FOR THE DAY WHEN YOU'LL SMILE AGAIN, CHITOSE...
I'M WAITING FOR THE DAY THAT YOU'LL BE REUNITED WITH YOUR SISTER TOO...
THIS DREAM IS SHOWING KASHINA'S MEMORIES.
LET'S WAIT FOR HIRUKO TO COME BACK TOGETHER.
YOU HAVE NEW INJURIES.
IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A PRIZED TOY.
H-HIRUKO, THIS STORE-ROOM...
UH-HUH MY PAST SELF IS HERE

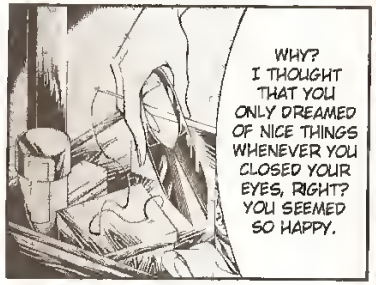
YOU'RE NOT ALONE, CHITOSE.
NO! I'M GOING TO STAY NEAR YOU!
IT'S TIME THEY WERE COMING GO NOW
CREEAK
SO, WHAT SHALL WE PLAY TODAY?
RIP
RIP
AGH!
CREAK
SHE HAS TO. 'CAUSE THEY'RE IN THE SAME SITUATION.
HA HA... SHE SURE DOES A GOOD JOB TAKING CARE OF YOU.
FLINCH
HOW CAN YOU NOT REMEMBER? SHE'S YOUR ONLY RELATIVE, RIGHT?! THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WRONG.
...
WHAT?! YOU HAVE AN OLDER SISTER?!
MY SISTER...
I DON'T REMEMBER...
MY ...
... SISTER ...
ANYWAY, IF YOU GO THROUGH THIS DREAM, MAYBE YOU'LL BE ABLE TO MEET YOUR SISTER. YOUR BRAVE AND KIND SISTER...
SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM THAT CAUSED HIM TO LOSE PART OF HIS MEMORY.
I DON'T HAVE ANY SIBLINGS, SO I'M JEALOUS.

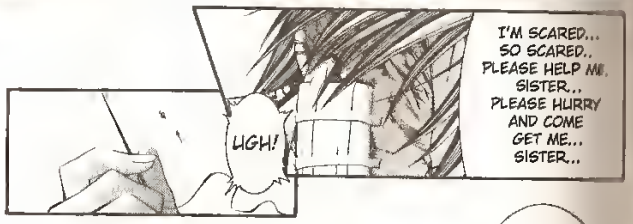
WHY DO I STILL HAVE THIS MEMORY...?

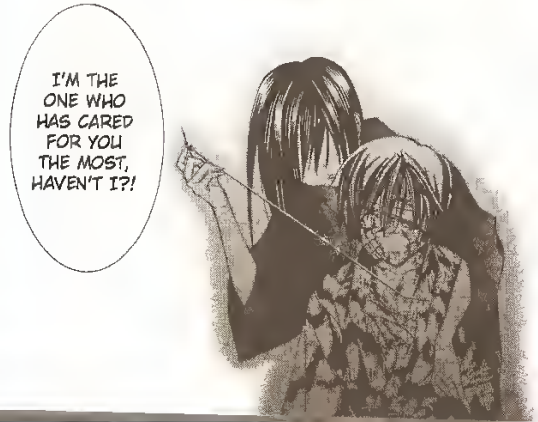
Ha ha, he'd dine on feces!
YES, HOW EXCITING!
HMM... WE COULD BREAK HIS LIMBS AND THROW HIM IN THE SEPTIC TANK...
NGH...
AGH.
AND IT'S SO FUN TO WATCH HIM SCREAM OUT IN PAIN.
YANK
BUT THEN WE'D LOSE OUR FAVORITE TOY.
THIS SCENE...
!
YOU REMEMBER, DON'T YOU? THIS IS PART OF YOUR MEMORY, ISN'T IT?!
NO...


I KEEP SEEING... FRIGHTENING DREAMS... I'M SO SCARED...

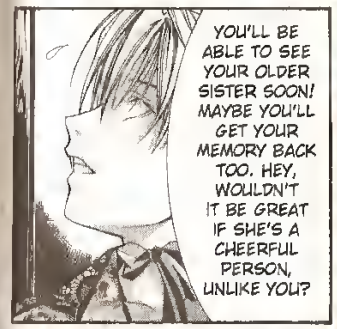

YOU HAVEN'T BEEN SLEEPING LATELY.

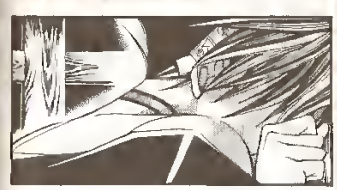

WHY? I THOUGHT THAT YOU ONLY DREAMED OF NICE THINGS WHENEVER YOU CLOSED YOUR EYES, RIGHT? YOU SEEMED SO HAPPY.

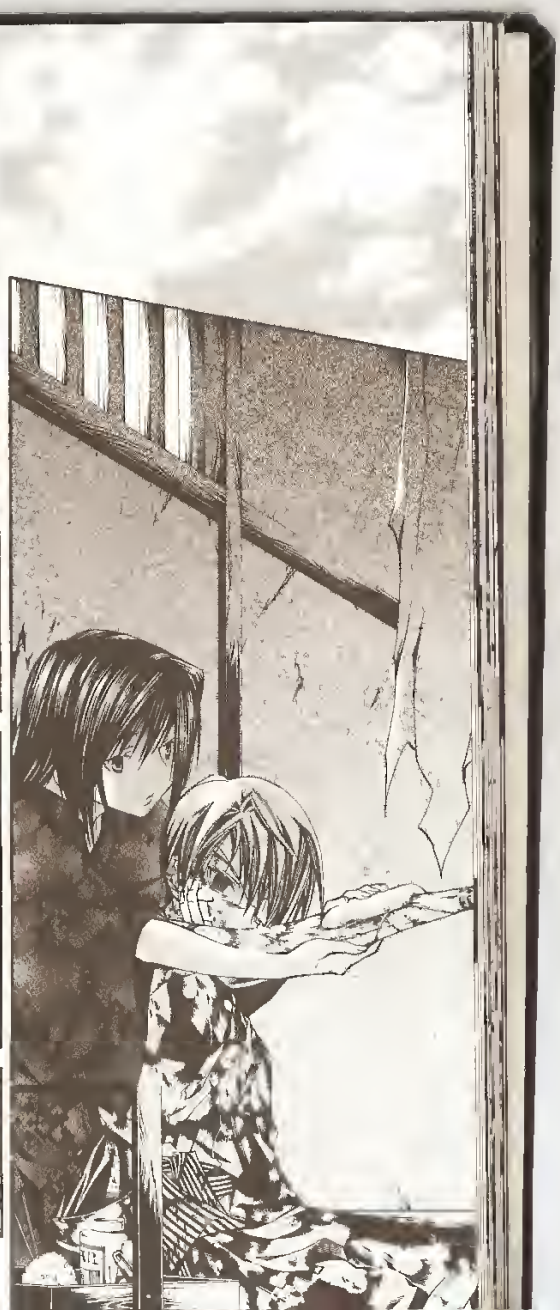

I'M SCARED... SO SCARED.. PLEASE HELP ME, SISTER... PLEASE HURRY AND COME GET ME... SISTER..
UGH!

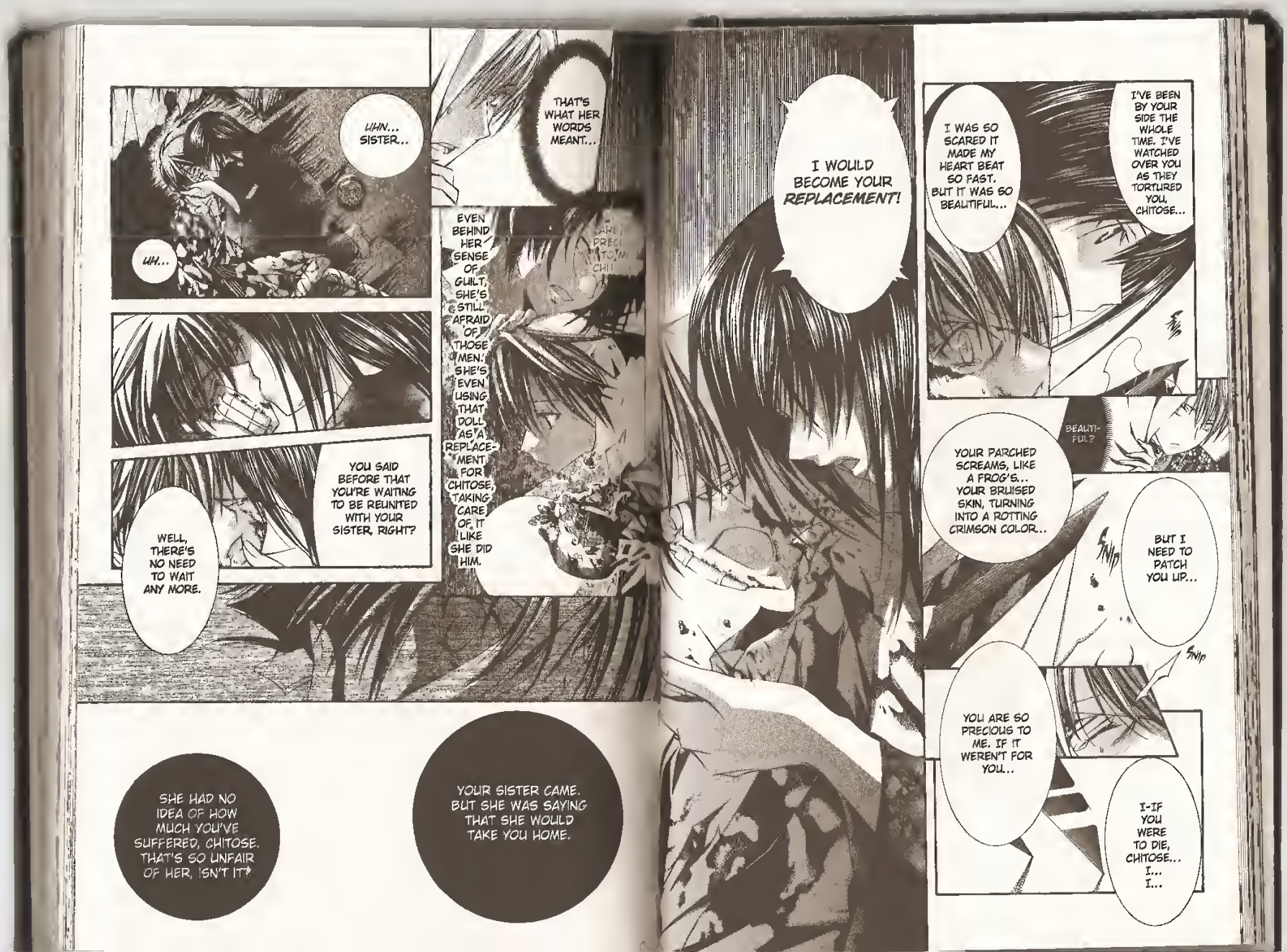

I'M THE ONE WHO HAS CARED FOR YOU THE MOST, HAVEN'T I?!
WHY...? WHY DO YOU CALL FOR YOUR SISTER?

IT'S A NEW DAY. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
...

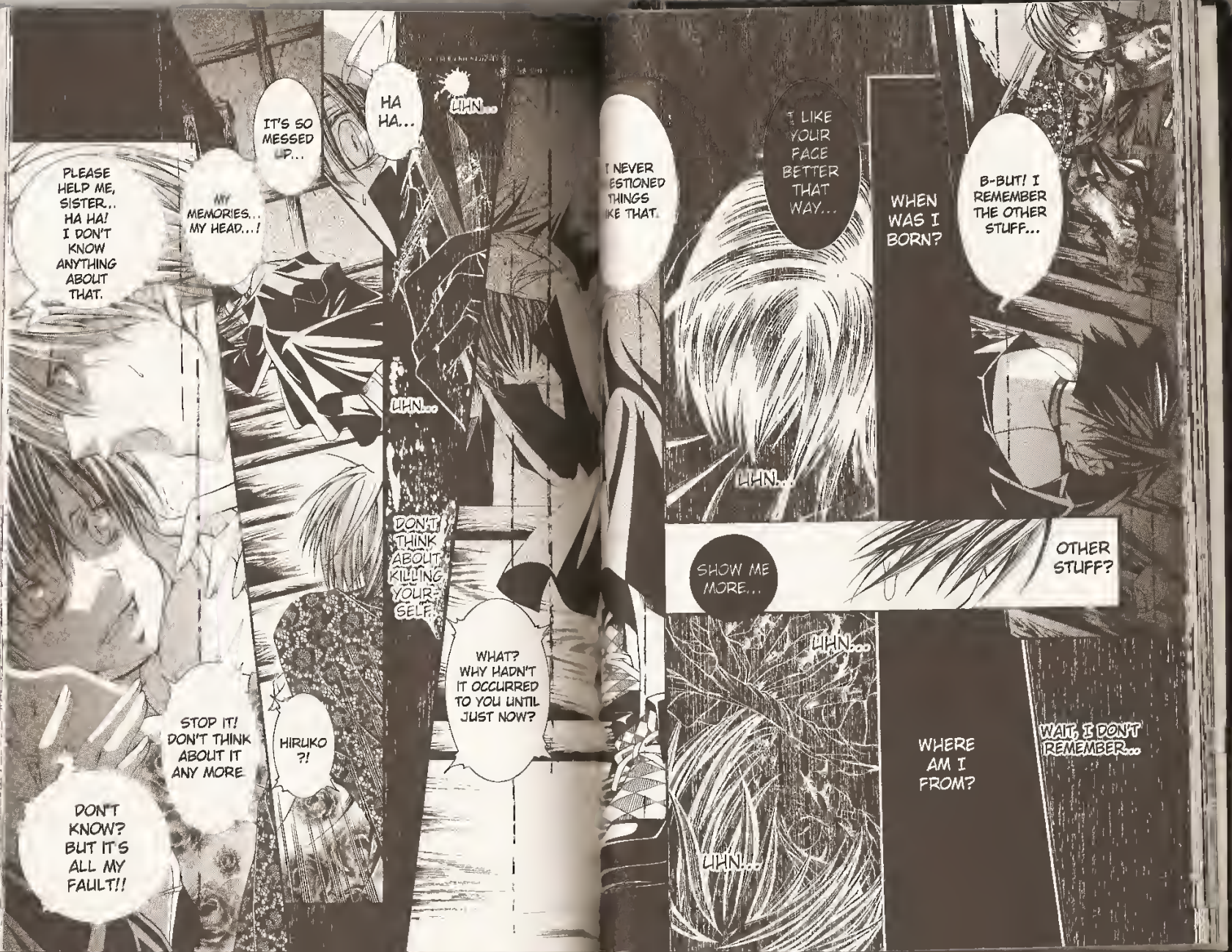

YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SEE YOUR OLDER SISTER SOON! MAYBE YOU'LL GET YOUR MEMORY BACK TOO. HEY, WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT IF SHE'S A CHEERFUL PERSON, UNLIKE YOU?

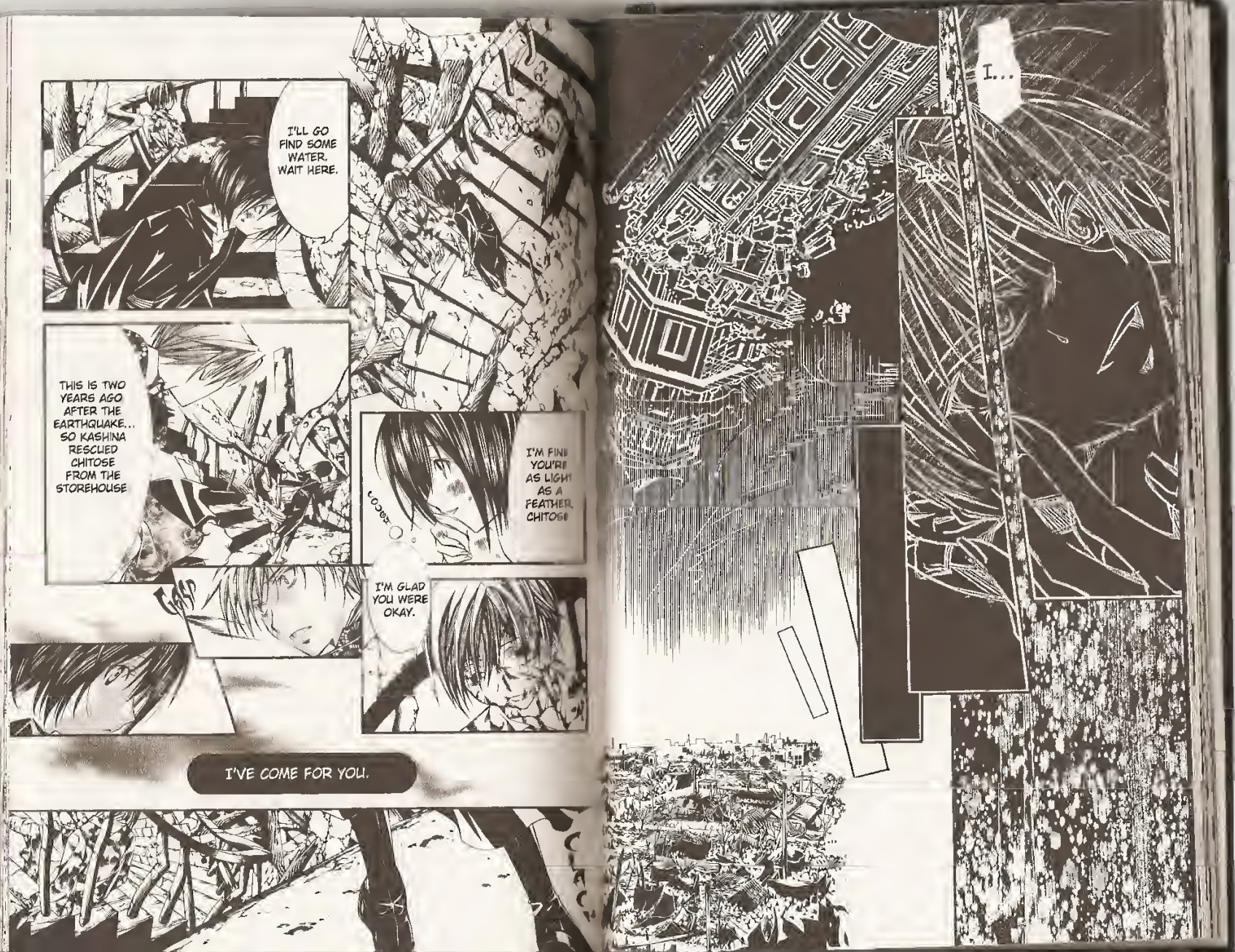




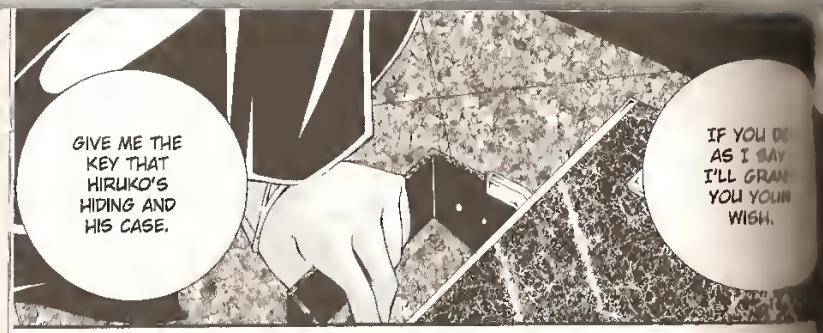

UHN... SISTER...
UH...
THAT'S WHAT HER WORDS MEANT...
EVEN BEHIND HER SENSE OF GUILT, SHE'S STILL AFRAID OF THOSE MEN. SHE'S EVEN USING THAT DOLL AS A REPLACEMENT FOR CHITOSE, TAKING CARE OF IT LIKE SHE DID HIM.
YOU SAID BEFORE THAT YOU'RE WAITING TO BE REUNITED WITH YOUR SISTER, RIGHT?
WELL, THERE'S NO NEED TO WAIT ANY MORE.
I WOULD BECOME YOUR REPLACEMENT!
I'VE BEEN BY YOUR SIDE THE WHOLE TIME. I'VE WATCHED OVER YOU AS THEY TORTURED YOU, CHITOSE...
I WAS SO SCARED IT MADE MY HEART BEAT SO FAST. BUT IT WAS SO BEAUTIFUL...
BEAUTI-FUL?
YOUR PARCHED SCREAMS, LIKE A FROG'S... YOUR BRUISED SKIN, TURNING INTO A ROTTING CRIMSON COLOR...
SNIP
BUT I NEED TO PATCH YOU UP...
SNIP
YOU ARE SO PRECIOUS TO ME. IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU...
I-IF YOU WERE TO DIE, CHITOSE... I... I...
SHE HAD NO IDEA OF HOW MUCH YOU'VE SUFFERED, CHITOSE. THAT'S SO UNFAIR OF HER, ISN'T IT?
YOUR SISTER CAME. BUT SHE WAS SAYING THAT SHE WOULD TAKE YOU HOME.

SO I WANTED HER TO KNOW...
I TREATED HER THE SAME WAY YOU HAD BEEN TREATED BUT SHE BROKE AND COMPLETELY CAME APART.
UGH...
UH...
HEY...
UH...
PLEASE SMILE...
AAAA


PLEASE HELP ME, SISTER.. HA HA! I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT.
MY MEMORIES... MY HEAD...!
IT'S SO MESSED UP...
HA HA...
UHN...
UHN...
DON'T THINK ABOUT KILLING YOURSELF.
WHAT? WHY HADN'T IT OCCURRED TO YOU UNTIL JUST NOW?
HIRUKO ?!
STOP IT! DON'T THINK ABOUT IT ANY MORE.
DON'T KNOW? BUT IT'S ALL MY FAULT!!
I NEVER ESTIONED THINGS IKE THAT.
I LIKE YOUR FACE BETTER THAT WAY...
UHN...
WHEN WAS I BORN?
B-BUT! I REMEMBER THE OTHER STUFF...
SHOW ME MORE...
OTHER STUFF?
UHN...
UHN...
WHERE AM I FROM?
WAIT, I DON'T REMEMBER...

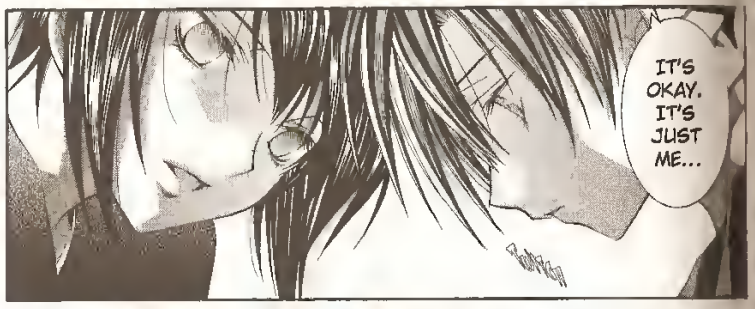

I'LL GO FIND SOME WATER. WAIT HERE.
THIS IS TWO YEARS AGO AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE... SO KASHINA RESCUED CHITOSE FROM THE STOREHOUSE
I'M FINE YOU'RE AS LIGHT AS A FEATHER, CHITOSE
KOKO
I'M GLAD YOU WERE OKAY.
I'VE COME FOR YOU.
I...

IF KASHINA WAS THERE TOO, THEN WHY...
...DON'T I REMEMBER HER?
WHY?
BAB MP
WHY?
BAB MP
WHY ...?
OH...
I REMEMBER THIS SCENE...
AZUSA...
THEN WHY...
BAB MP

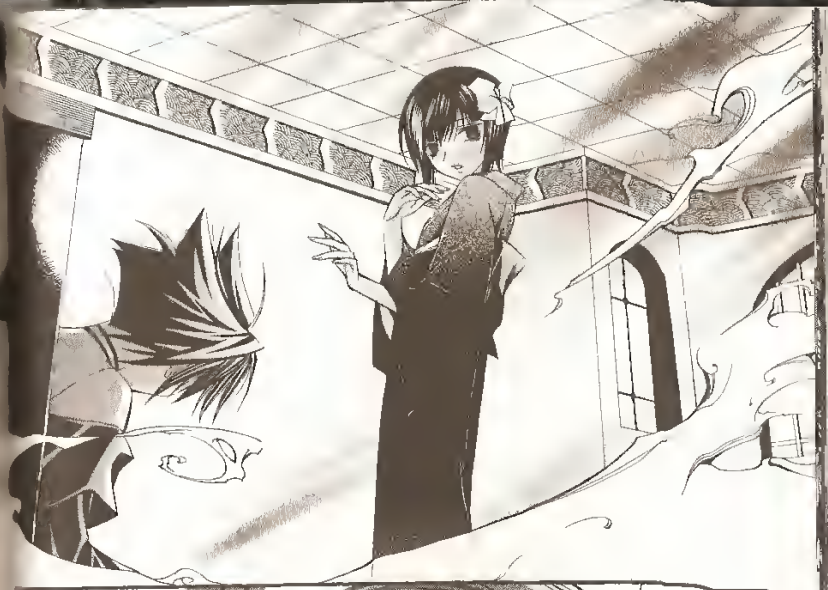

GIVE ME THE KEY THAT HIRUKO'S HIDING AND HIS CASE.
IF YOU DO AS I SAY I'LL GRAN YOU YOUR WISH.

BUT...
GRIP

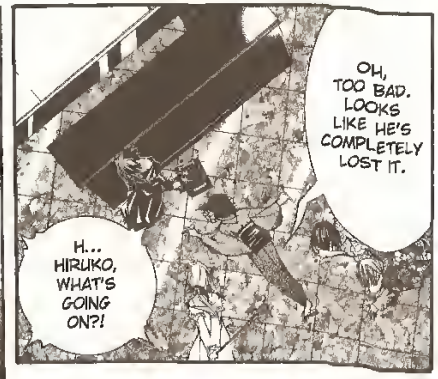
HIS CASE?!
NO! DON'T DO IT, MIZUKI. YOU CAN'T TRUST SOME-BODY LIKE HIM!


IT'S OKAY. IT'S JUST ME...

HIRUKO! YOU FOOL!

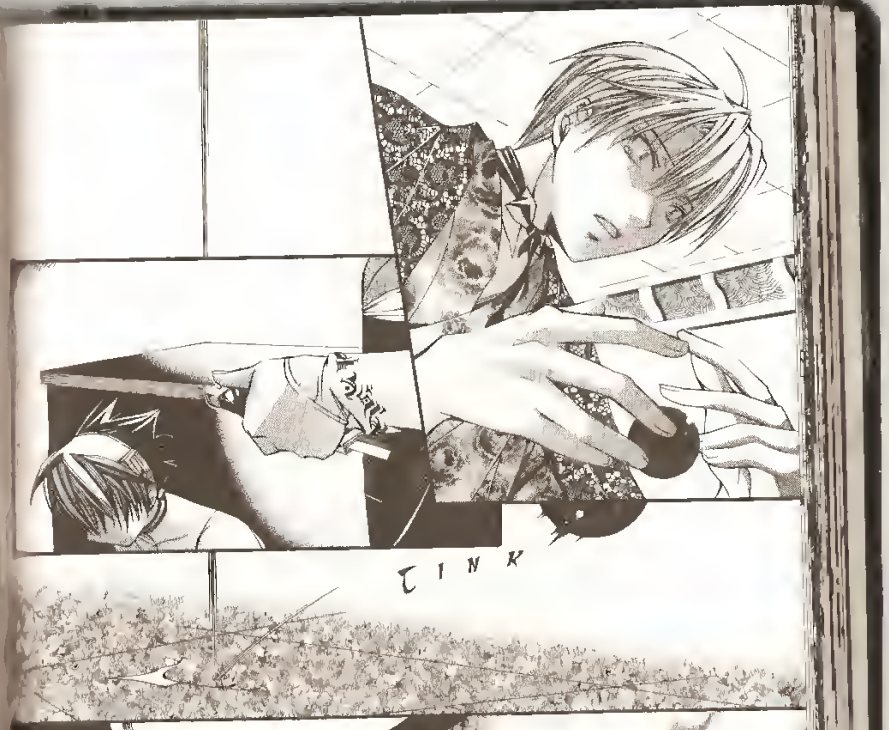


HEY...

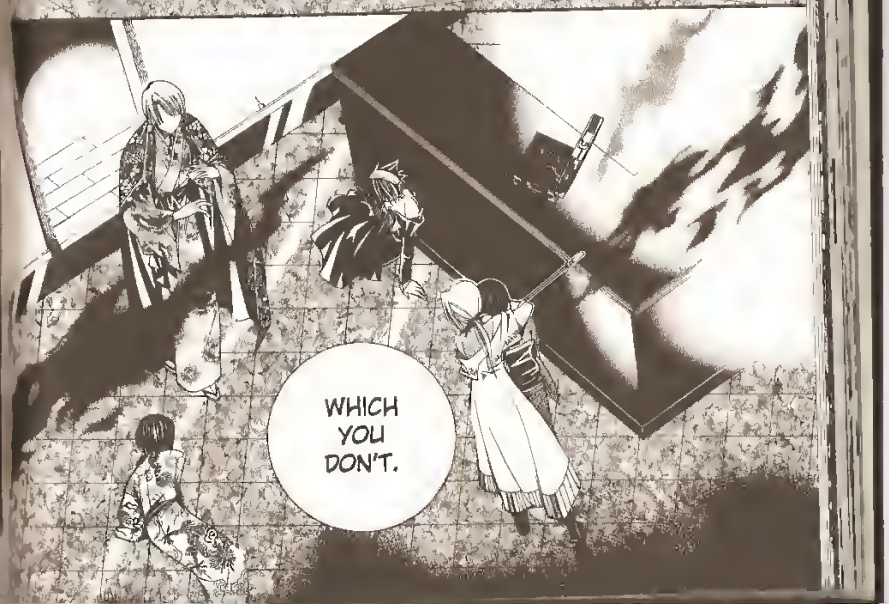

OH, TOO BAD. LOOKS LIKE HE'S COMPLETELY LOST IT.
H... HIRUKO, WHAT'S GOING ON?!

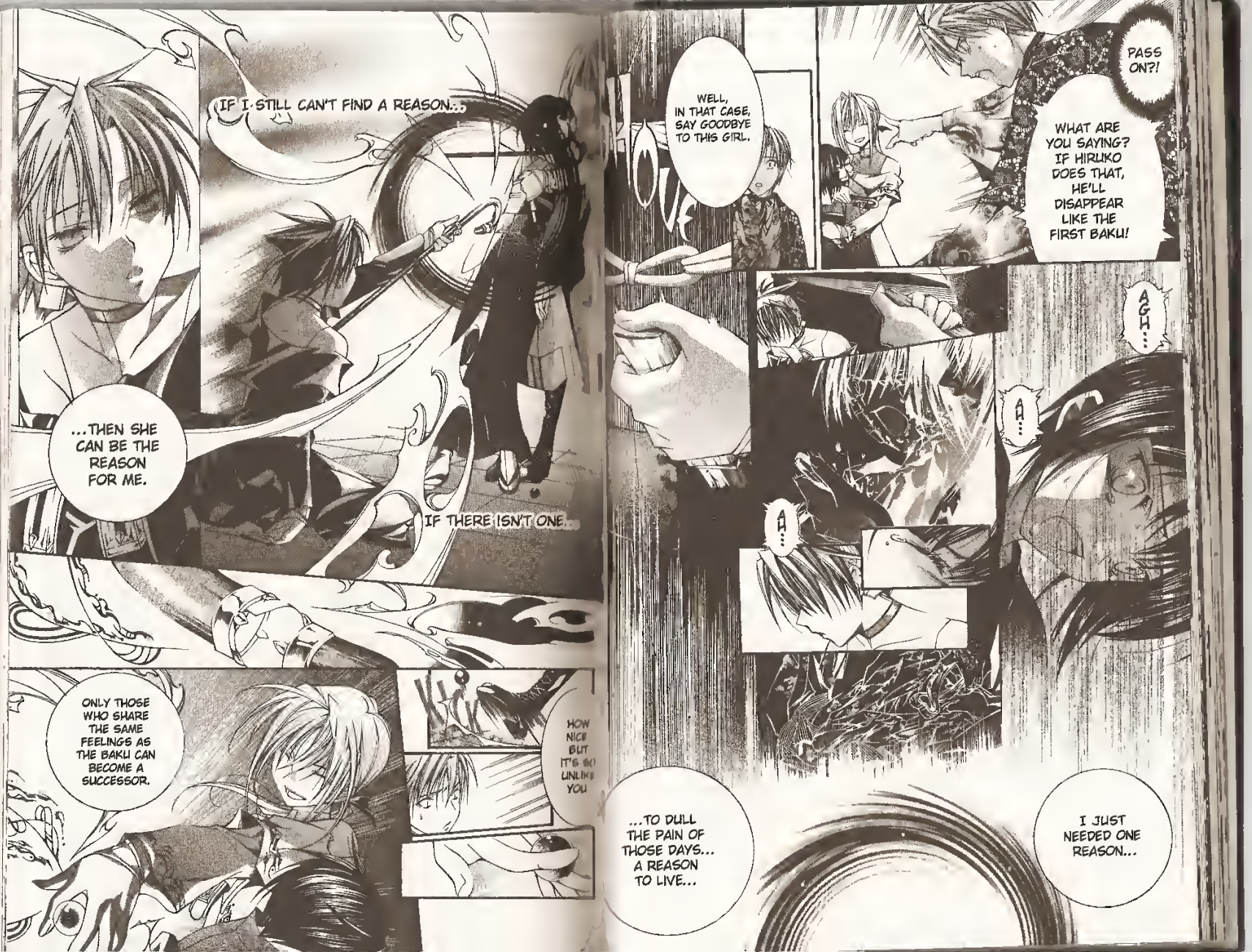
YOU'RE SO ANNOYING...
AH...
AH...
BUT YOU SHOULD ONLY ATTEMPT PLAYING THE HERO WHEN YOU ACTUALLY HAVE THE STRENGTH TO SAVE AT LEAST ONE PERSON'S LIFE.
THAT'S WHY YOU HAD BEEN HIDING IT FROM MIZUKI ALL THIS TIME!
AZUSA'S INSIDE HERE!
AZUSA DOESN'T EVEN REMEMBER MIZUKI ANYMORE...

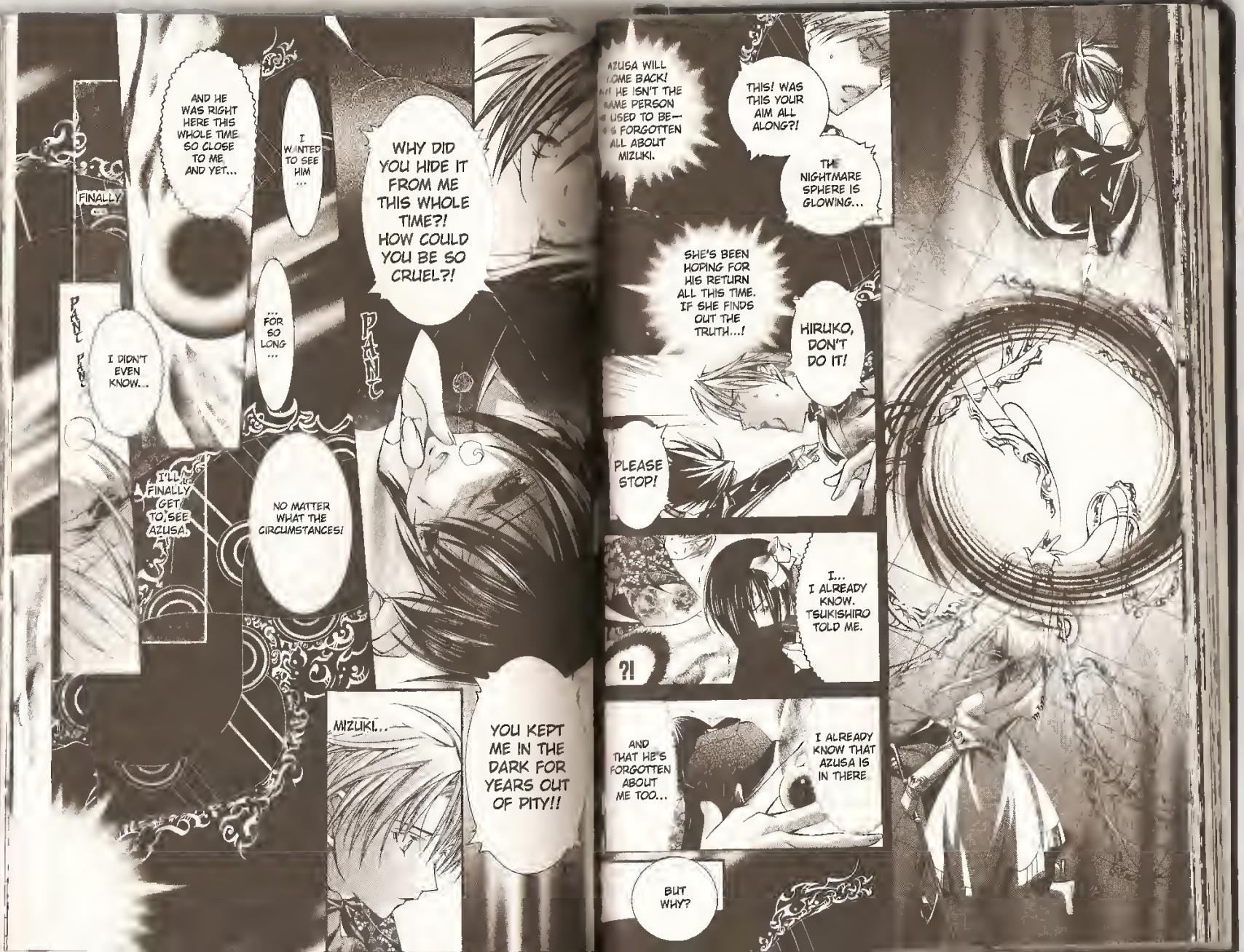
# THE FIFTY-NINTH NIGHT: SWITCH



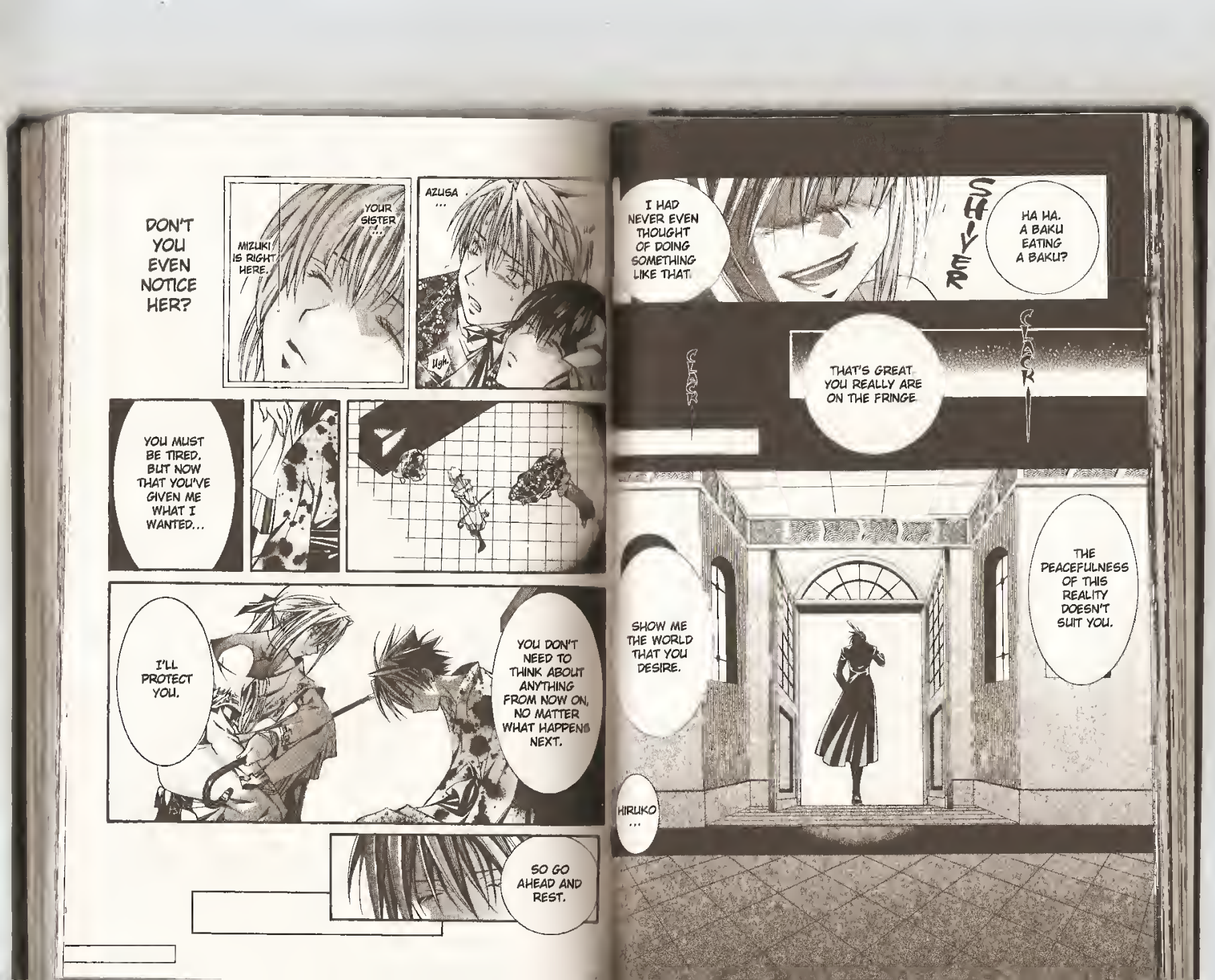
...IS TO PASS ON THE BAKU'S IMMORTALITY.
HMM, WHAT NOW? ONLY YOU CAN SAVE THIS GIRL, HIRUKO. DO YOU UNDERSTAND? THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE HER..

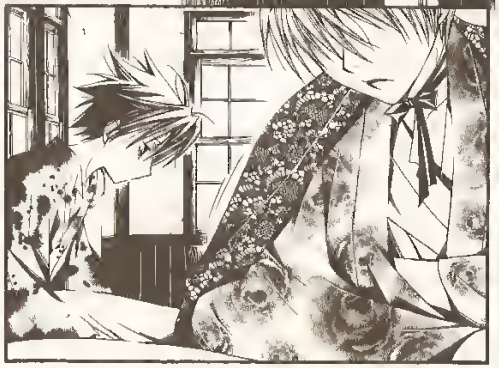


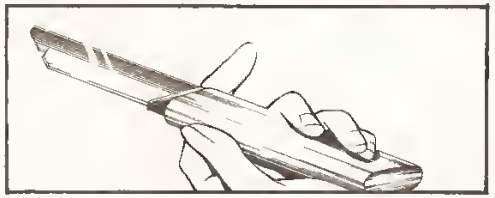

I JUST NEEDED ONE REASON...
...TO DULL THE PAIN OF THOSE DAYS... A REASON TO LIVE...
AGH...
A...
A...
PASS ON?!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? IF HIRUKO DOES THAT, HE'LL DISAPPEAR LIKE THE FIRST BAKU!
WELL, IN THAT CASE, SAY GOODBYE TO THIS GIRL.
LOVE
IF I STILL CAN'T FIND A REASON...
...THEN SHE CAN BE THE REASON FOR ME.
IF THERE ISN'T ONE...
ONLY THOSE WHO SHARE THE SAME FEELINGS AS THE BAKU CAN BECOME A SUCCESSOR.
HOW NICE! BUT IT'S OK! UNLIKE YOU

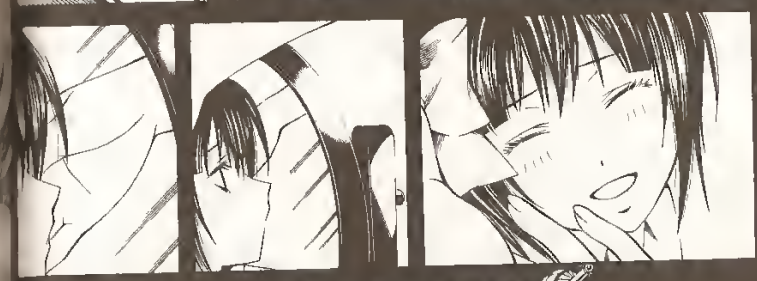

FINALLY
AND HE WAS RIGHT HERE THIS WHOLE TIME SO CLOSE TO ME AND YET...
I WANTED TO SEE HIM ...
... FOR SO LONG ...
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW...
I'LL FINALLY GET TO SEE AZUSA.
NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES!
WHY DID YOU HIDE IT FROM ME THIS WHOLE TIME?! HOW COULD YOU BE SO CRUEL?!
PANT
PANT
MIZUKI...
YOU KEPT ME IN THE DARK FOR YEARS OUT OF PITY!!
AZUSA WILL COME BACK! HE ISN'T THE SAME PERSON HE USED TO BE— HE'S FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT MIZUKI.
THIS! WAS THIS YOUR AIM ALL ALONG?!
THE NIGHTMARE SPHERE IS GLOWING...
SHE'S BEEN HOPING FOR HIS RETURN ALL THIS TIME. IF SHE FINDS OUT THE TRUTH...!
HIRUKO, DON'T DO IT!
PLEASE STOP!
?!
I... I ALREADY KNOW. TSUKISHIRO TOLD ME.
AND THAT HE'S FORGOTTEN ABOUT ME TOO...
I ALREADY KNOW THAT AZUSA IS IN THERE
BUT WHY?

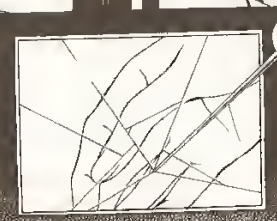
IT'S THE DAYS THAT YOU DREAD THE MOST THAT ARRIVE SO SUDDENLY
AND I WAS SO GRATEFUL TO YOU TOO...
CLACK
OH, YOU'LL THANK ME? HOW?
I'LL THANK YOU IN DUE TIME.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT ME BACK TO THE REAL WORLD
CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST TASTE LIKE?
YOUR BODY CONTAINS THE COUNTLESS NIGHTMARES THAT THE BAKU TSUKISHIRO HAS EATEN OVER THE YEARS.
NO...!
I-IT'S HIM!
HE'S THE ONE WHO TOOK CHITOSE AWAY FROM ME THAT DAY!
GRIN
AZUSA ...
PANT
PANT
FLUTTER
OH MY...
THE AIR IS SO HEAVY...
NO...


DON'T YOU EVEN NOTICE HER?
MIZUKI IS RIGHT HERE.
YOUR SISTER...
AZUSA ...
Ugh.
YOU MUST BE TIRED. BUT NOW THAT YOU'VE GIVEN ME WHAT I WANTED...
I'LL PROTECT YOU.
YOU DON'T NEED TO THINK ABOUT ANYTHING FROM NOW ON, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.
SO GO AHEAD AND REST.
I HAD NEVER EVEN THOUGHT OF DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
SHIVER
HA HA. A BAKU EATING A BAKU?
CLACK
CLACK
THAT'S GREAT. YOU REALLY ARE ON THE FRINGE
SHOW ME THE WORLD THAT YOU DESIRE.
THE PEACEFULNESS OF THIS REALITY DOESN'T SUIT YOU.
HIRUKO ...

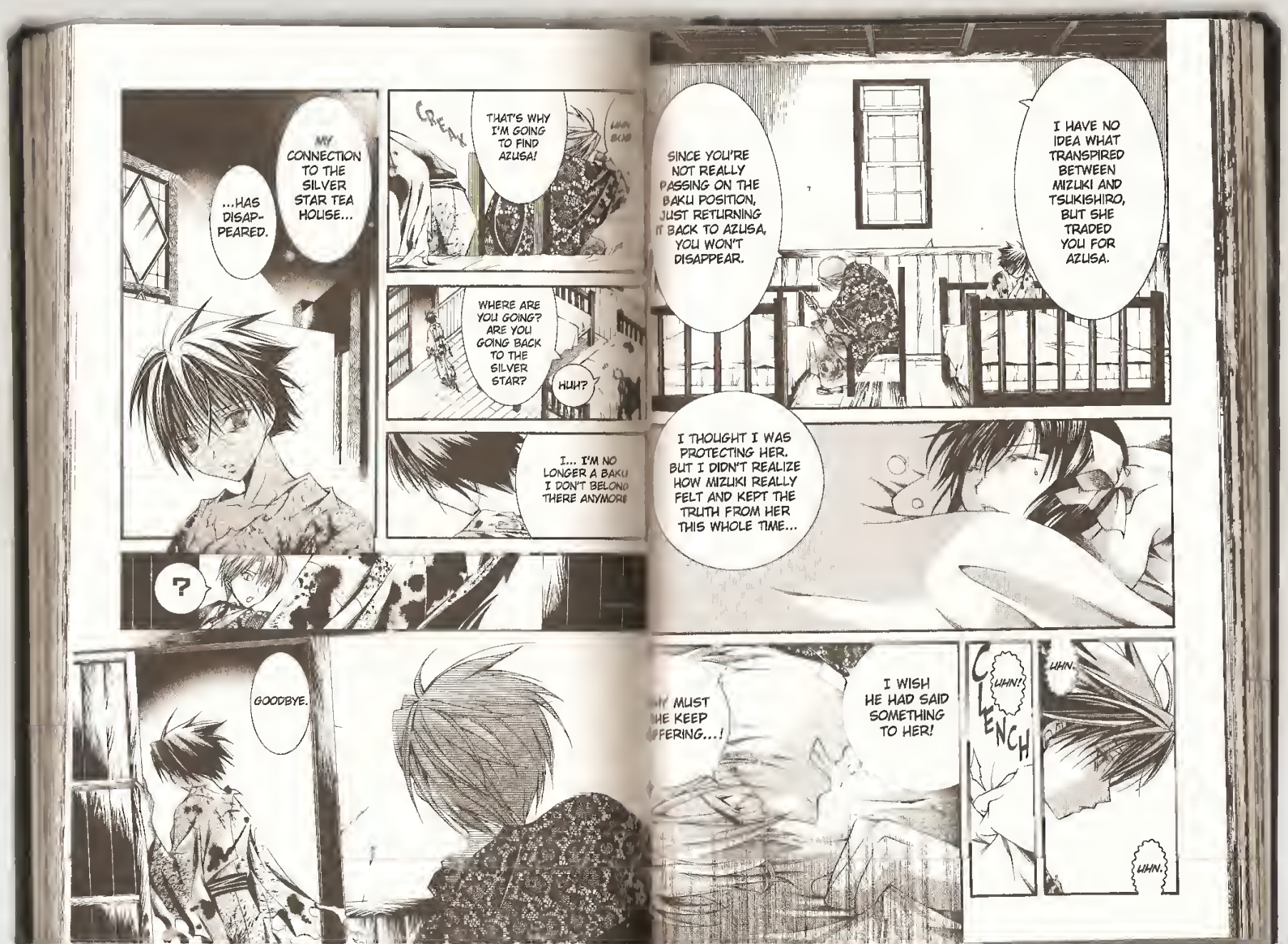


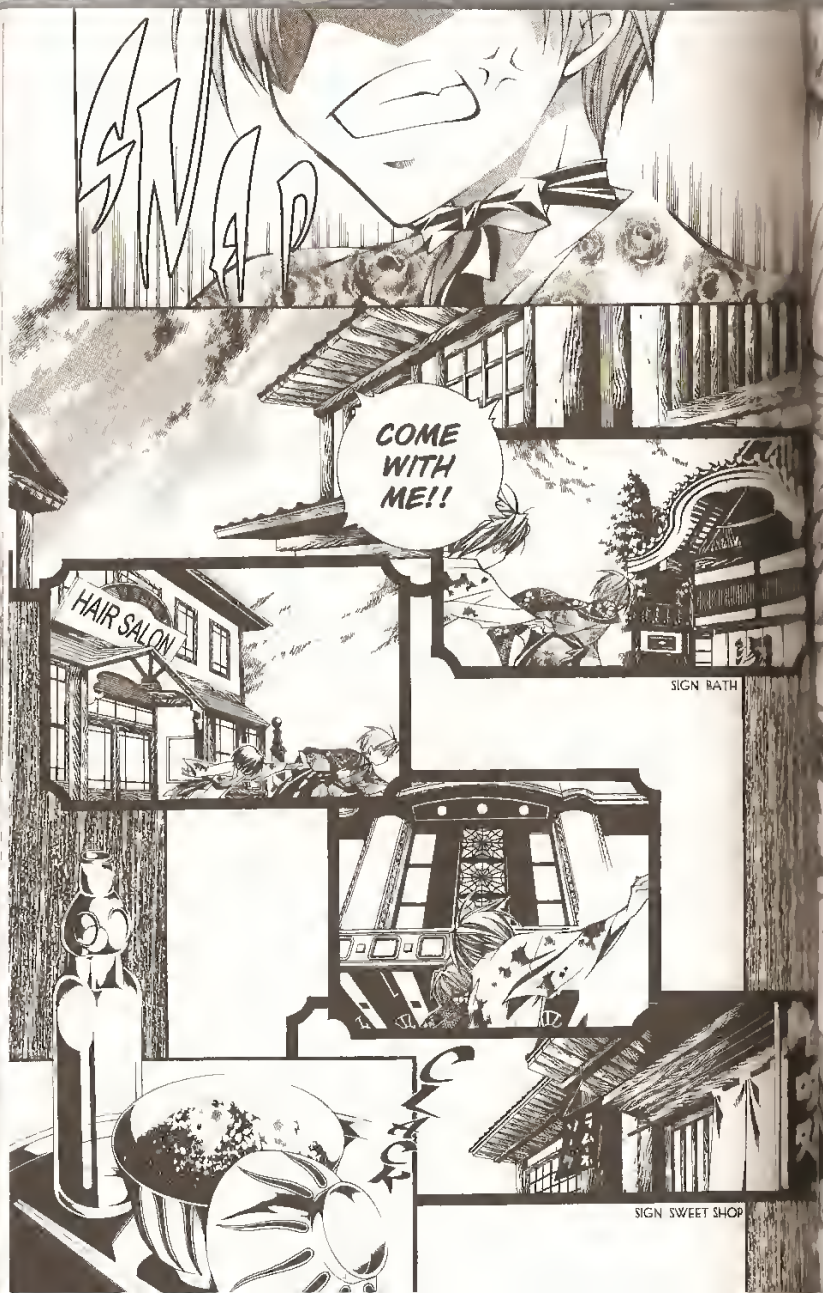






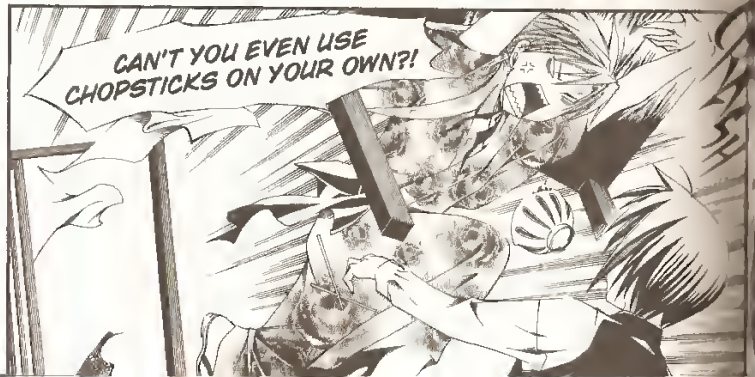
DON'T GO ANYWHERE...

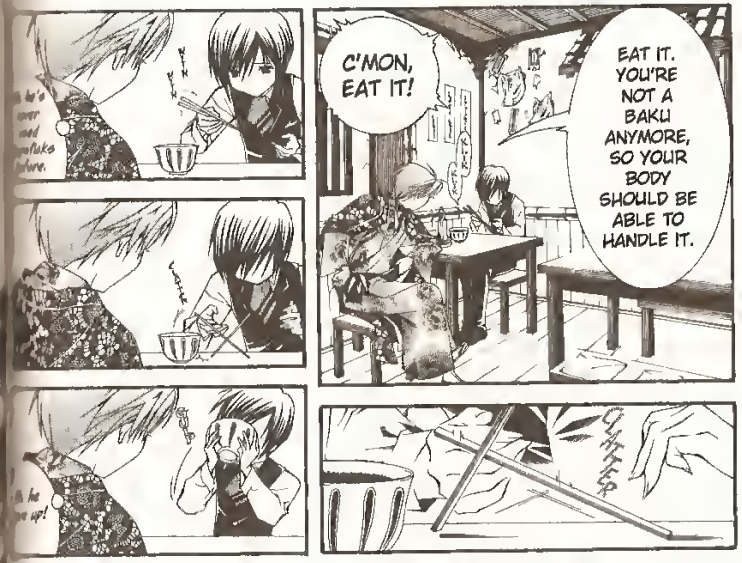

MY CONNECTION TO THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE...
...HAS DISAP-PEARED.
?
CREAK
THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO FIND AZUSA!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING? ARE YOU GOING BACK TO THE SILVER STAR?
HUH?
I... I'M NO LONGER A BAKU I DON'T BELONG THERE ANYMORE
GOODBYE.
SINCE YOU'RE NOT REALLY PASSING ON THE BAKU POSITION, JUST RETURNING IT BACK TO AZUSA, YOU WON'T DISAPPEAR.
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TRANSPIRED BETWEEN MIZUKI AND TSUKISHIRO, BUT SHE TRADED YOU FOR AZUSA.
I THOUGHT I WAS PROTECTING HER. BUT I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MIZUKI REALLY FELT AND KEPT THE TRUTH FROM HER THIS WHOLE TIME...
I WISH HE HAD SAID SOMETHING TO HER!
CLENCH
UHN!
UHN.
UHN.

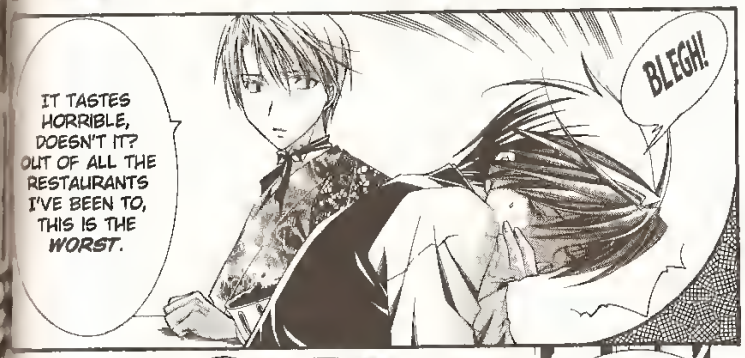

SNAP
COME WITH ME!!
HAIR SALON
SIGN BATH
SIGN SWEET SHOP
CLICK

HE CAN'T ...!
HEY!
IN THAT CASE, YOU HAVE NO REASON TO DIE EITHER.
BECAUSE YOU THINK THAT YOU HAVE NO REASON TO LIVE.
COUGH!
YOU'RE NOT EVEN TRYING TO STOP ME.

DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, FIND THINGS YOU LIKE, AND ENJOY THEM TO THE FULLEST.
YOU'RE NO LONGER SOMEBODY'S TOY OR BEING CONSUMED BY NIGHTMARES.
BUT BY YOURSELF...
I CAN'T BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR LIFE. TAKE CARE...
CLATTER
THEY NAMED YOU "CHITOSE" SO THAT YOU MAKE THE PERSON WHO NAMED YOU A THOUSAND TIMES HAPPIER THEN...
FROM NOW ON, SMILE A THOUSAND TIMES FOR YOUR *OWN* SAKE.
CLATTER
KNOCK KNOCK
KNOCK KNOCK
CLATTER
CLATCH


CAN'T YOU EVEN USE CHOPSTICKS ON YOUR OWN?!


C'MON, EAT IT!
EAT IT. YOU'RE NOT A BAKU ANYMORE, SO YOUR BODY SHOULD BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT.
CLATTER


IT TASTES HORRIBLE, DOESN'T IT? OUT OF ALL THE RESTAURANTS I'VE BEEN TO, THIS IS THE *WORST*.
BLEGH!

...
DO YOU GET WHAT I'M TRYING TO TELL YOU?
BUT FROM NOW ON, YOU CAN EAT ANYTHING YOU WANT. EVERYTHING YOU TASTE WILL BE MUCH BETTER THAN THIS.

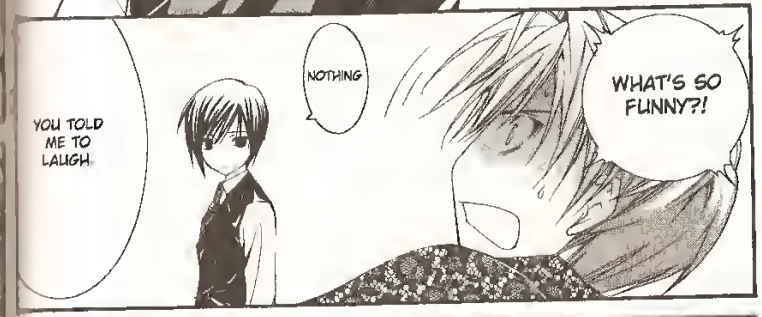
DREAM...
THAT'S BEEN MY IDEAL DREAM ALL ALONG.
BUT YOU AND AZUSA AREN'T...
THAT'S WHY... EVERYONE NEEDS TO... YOU HAVE TO... BE AT SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE LAUGHING..
BUT...
BUT YOU'RE KIND.
TSUKISHIRO WAS RIGHT. YOU'RE SO ANNOYING.
WHAT—?!
WHAT A STUPID DREAM. IT'S SO SELF-CENTERED AND FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS.
Hey...
IT WAS POINTLESS TRYING TO TEST YOU.
ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE MY LIFE WORSE?! I'M GOING TO MARRY MIZUKI! I'M GOING TO EAT FOOD THAT TASTES MUCH BETTER THAN THAT RESTAURANT AND DRINK THE MOST WONDERFUL COFFEE FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE!
BUT THAT HAPPINESS CAN'T BE COMPLETE IF THERE'S EVEN THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF GLOOM!
WHY...
THAT'S WHY...!
I'LL BE ...
NAAMU WILL HAVE BABIES ...
MIZUKI WILL MAKE COFFEE ...
AZUSA WILL COME BACK ...
AND YOU'LL BE THERE SULKING WITH ENVY ...

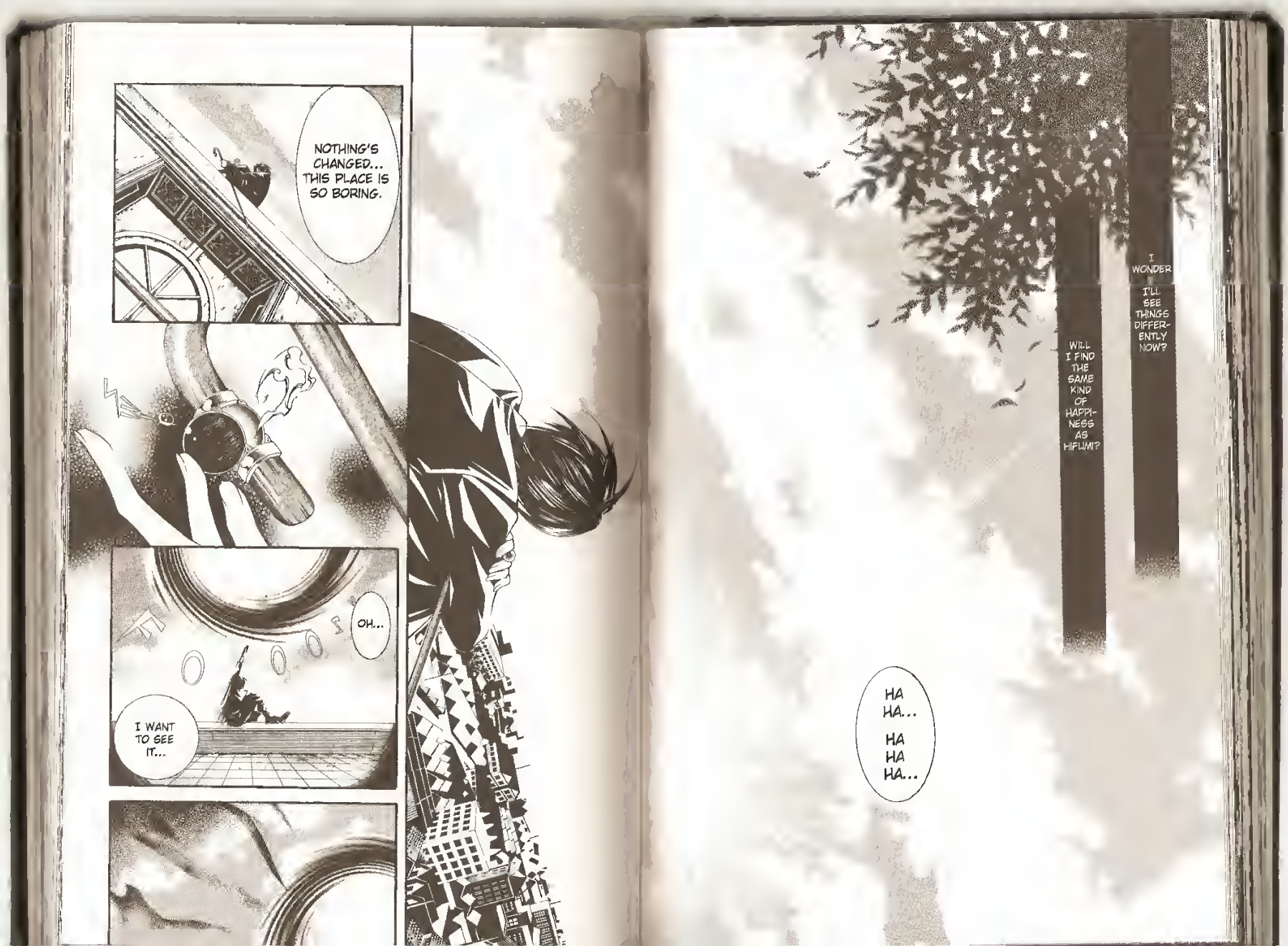
IN ANY CASE, JUST STAY PUT AT SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE. YOU SHOULD JUST BE CONTENT WITH THE LITTLE MORSEL OF HAPPINESS THAT I TOSS YOUR WAY

JUST LAUGH FOR NOW...

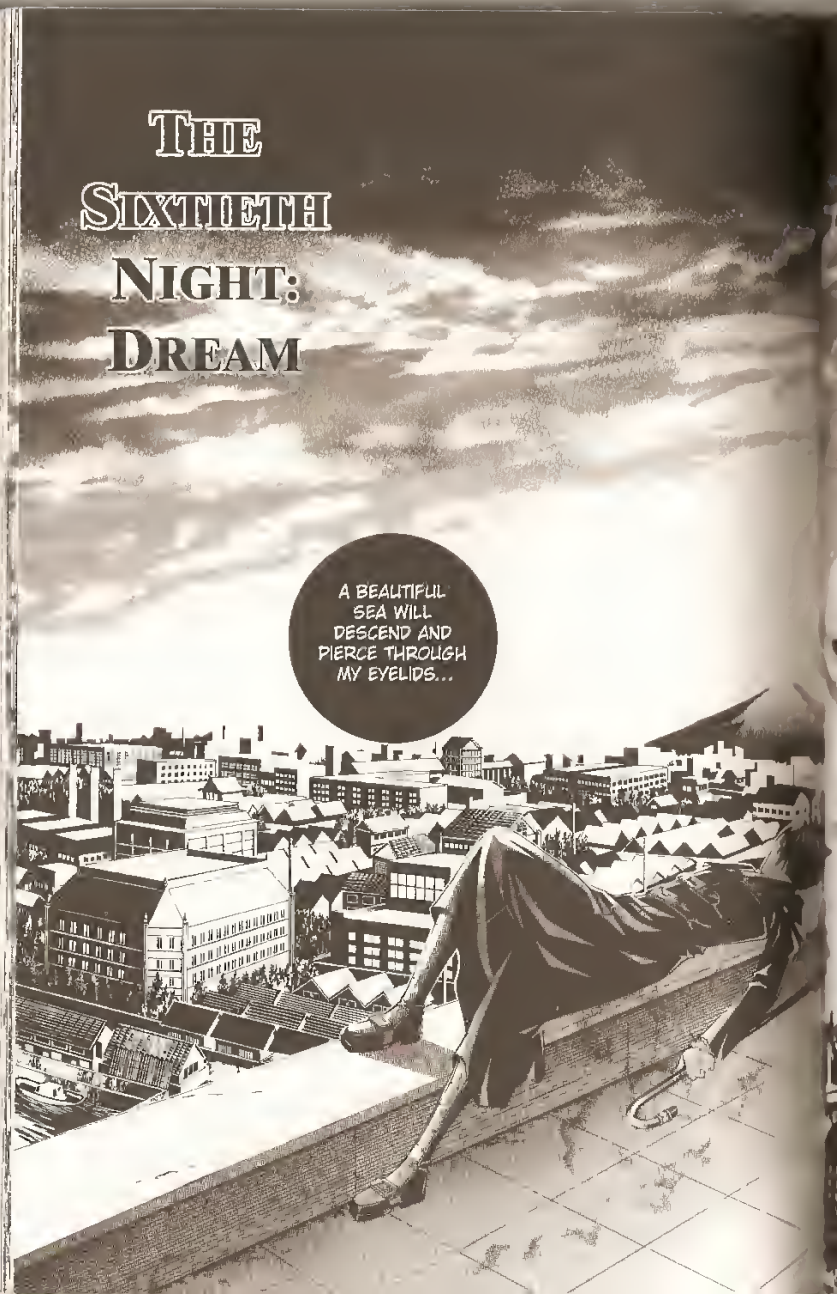
I'LL EXPERIENCE NEW THINGS ONE BY ONE...

I WILL NO LONGER BE CONSUMED BY NIGHTMARES.

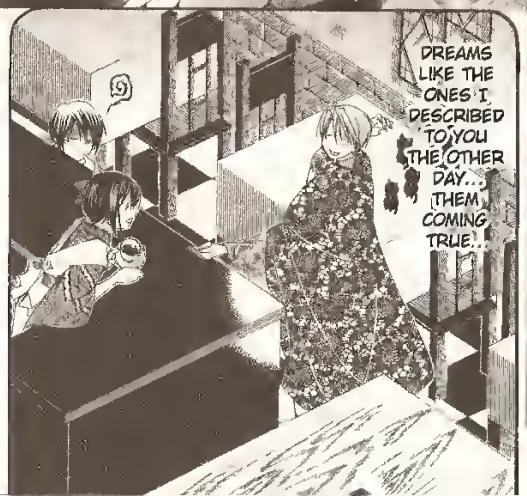



NOTHING'S CHANGED... THIS PLACE IS SO BORING.
OH...
I WANT TO SEE IT...
I WONDER
I'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY NOW?
WILL I FIND THE SAME KIND OF HAPPINESS AS HIFUMI?
HA HA... HA HA HA...

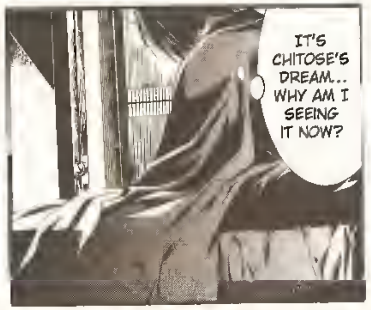
# The Sixtieth Night: Dream



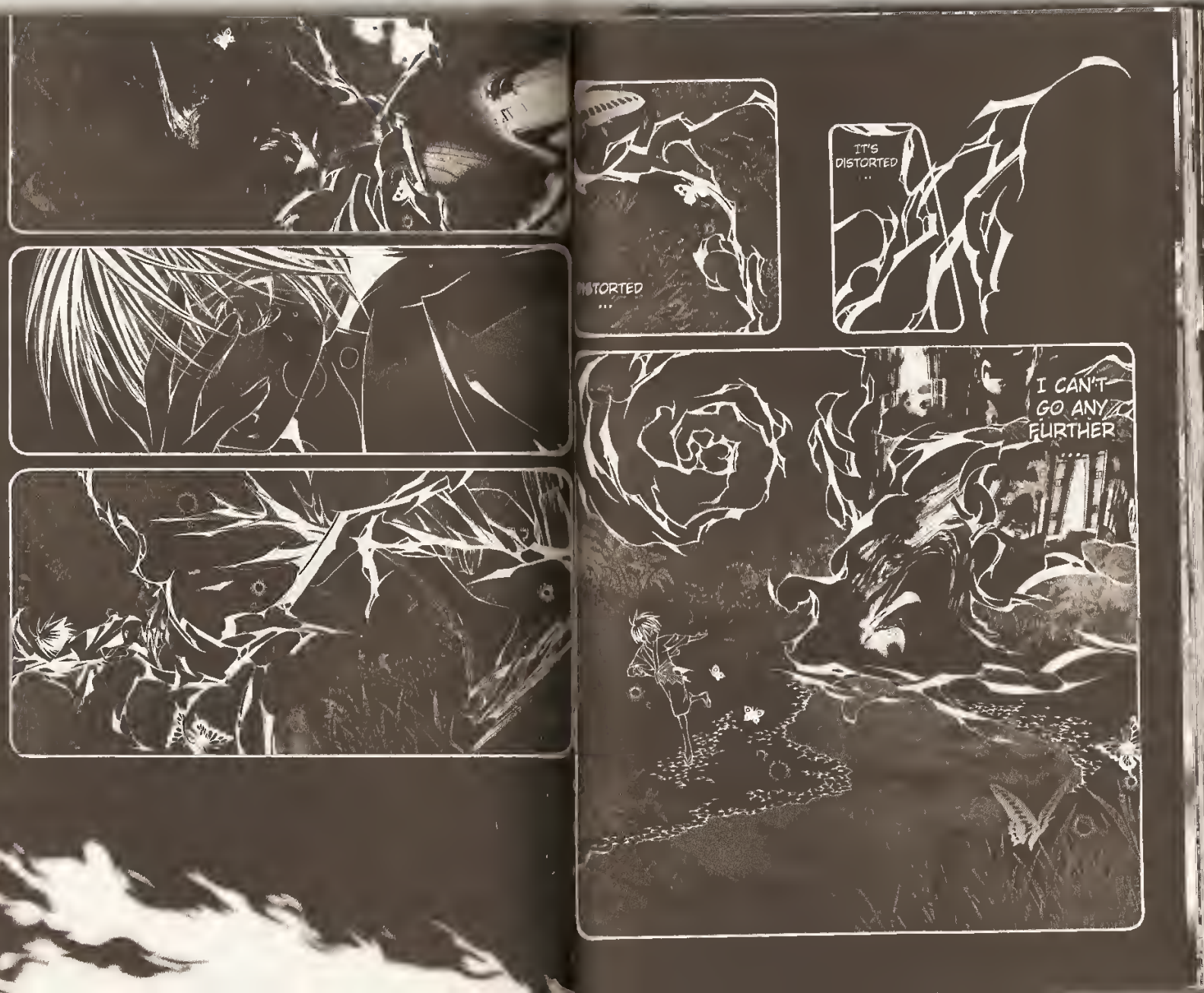
YOU'LL BE OKAY ON YOUR OWN, RIGHT?
OH, YOU'RE AWAKE. I'M GOING TO STAY OVERNIGHT AT THE HOSPITAL FROM TODAY SO I CAN BE BY MIZUKI'S BEDSIDE.



CLATTER CLATTER



SORRY, I'M IN A HURRY SINCE IT'S ABOUT TO START RAINING. USE THIS TO FEED YOURSELF AND NAAMU. BUY WHATEVER YOU WANT.
HIFUMI?
WEREN'T YOU GOING TO LOOK FOR AZUSA?
I'LL DO IT LATER.
... SCARY ...
AN IDEAL DREAM...
JUST LIKE MINE.
THAT WAS A DREAM FROM MY PAST... SHOWING ME AN UNATTAINABLE HAPPINESS, IT WAS INTENSE AND SELF-INDULGENT. BUT PURE...
... AND ...
NO, IT'S MORE THAN THAT...
THEY WERE INTENSE... SO INTENSE THAT IT WAS MORE CAPTIVATING THAN JUST A MERE DREAM.

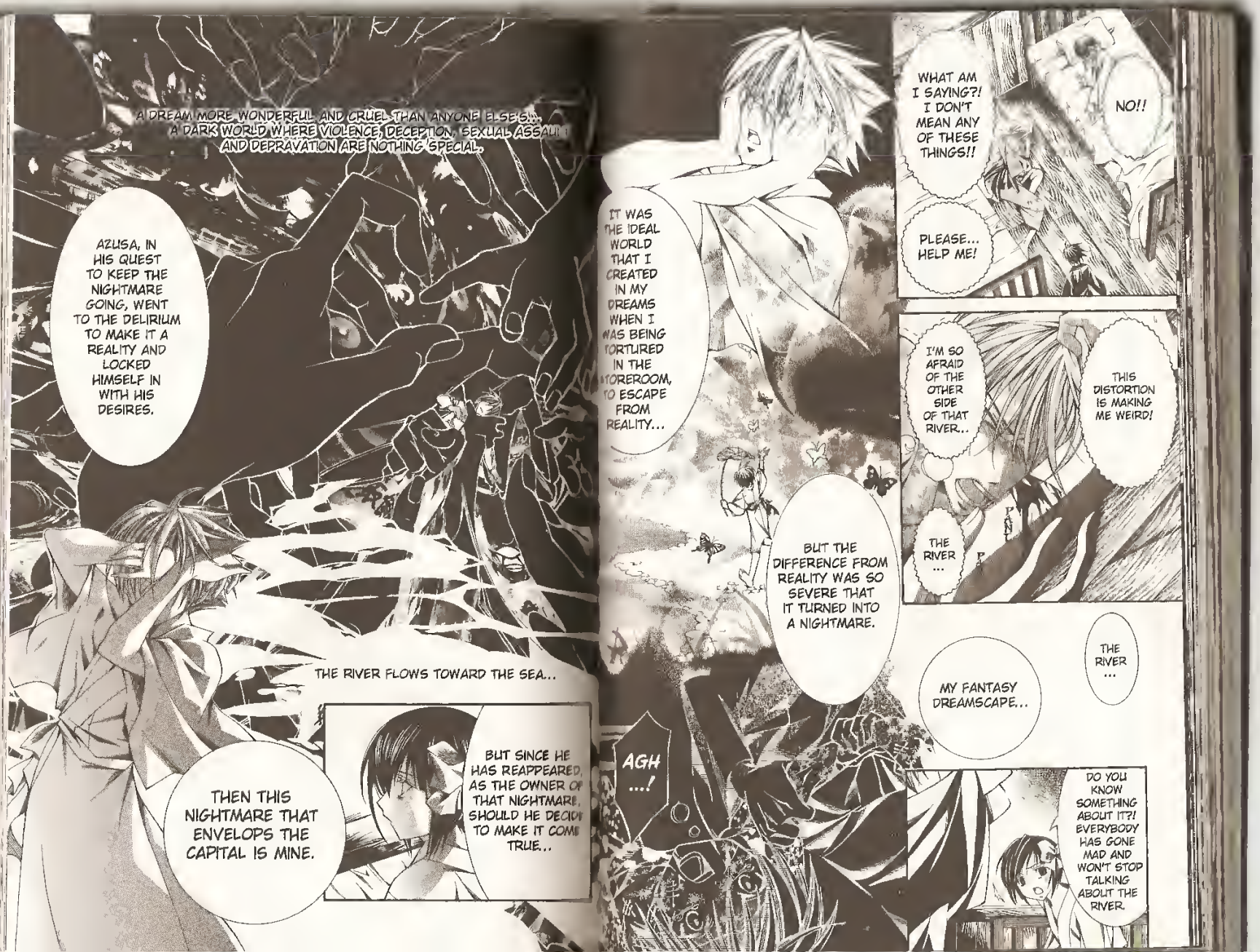

DISTORTED
...
IT'S DISTORTED
..
I CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER
....

BAKU!
YOU'RE A BAKU! DO SOMETHING ABOUT THESE NIGHTMARES, OR ELSE I'LL--!
IT'S DESTROYING ME TO MY VERY CORE, TWISTING A KNIFE IN OLD WOUNDS.
IT'S ENCOURAGING ME TO ACT ON MY EVIL THOUGHTS.
HUH? OH, MITSUBAYASHI FROM THE BATHHOUSE! I THOUGHT I LOOKED AT YOUR NIGHTMARE ALREADY...
...
THIS ONE IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT.
AT FIRST, IT WAS A PERFECT DREAM..
UHN...
AGH!
AT THIS PACE...
LET'S TURN ON THE RADIO.
CHITOSE'S DREAM AGAIN. HOW MANY DAYS HAVE I SEEN THIS NOW? IT PROGRESSES A LITTLE MORE EACH DAY.
THERE HAVE BEEN FIRES IN OVER 30 LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT TOKYO...
AT THE MANSION, FOUR MEN AND WOMEN WERE FOUND STABBED TO DEATH...
SIX FATALITIES WITH TEN MORE PEOPLE SERIOUSLY INJURED WHEN A TRAIN DERAILED..
HIRUKO!

I CUT OFF MY FATHER'S PRIVATES
THEN WHAT HAPPENED?
PAST THE RIVER, IT'S MY DISTORTION
IF THAT DISTORTION IS THE SAME AS WHAT I SAW...
HELP!
NO! HELP ME...
I DON'T WANT TO...
IF YOU'RE THERE, HELP ME WITH MY NIGHTMARES...
HELP ME...
THE RIVER...
THE DISTORTION...
...STEAM TRAIN BURST INTO FLAMES, DOZENS OF PEOPLE ARE DEAD...
EVER SINCE THAT CLOUD SANK OVER THE CAPITAL...
IT'S THE SAME FOR EVERYONE... THEY'RE ALL LOOKING AT THE DISTORTION... ALL OF THEM...
BAM
THE CLOUD!
MY MIND CONFUSED MY DREAM WITH REALITY...
BUT...
HE DESTROYED MY DREAM...
THE MOMENT I WAS BORN, MY EXISTENCE AS A WOMAN WAS COMPLETELY WIPED OUT IN HIS MIND!
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REALITY AND MY DREAM BECAME MORE APPARENT...
WHEN I AWOKE, MY SEXIST FATHER OPPOSED MY INTENTIONS, AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF MY DREAM BECAME MORE PRONOUNCED.
BUT...
MY LIFELONG DESIRE OF BEING IN THE MEN'S BATH CAME TRUE, AND I WAS ENJOYING IT WITH ELATION...
IN MY DREAM AN ABERRATION APPEARED. THERE WAS A RIVER, AND IT WAS PAST THAT...
AN ABERRATION...?
THE ABERRATION APPEARED IN MY DREAM.
IT'S DARK... PLEASE HELP ME!
I DON'T WANT TO GO OVER THERE. BUT I'M GETTING SUCKED IN!

HUH?
AS I STAND ON THE SOIL OF MY MOTHERLAND...
MY DREAM...
WHY AM I...
I'M USELESS...
THEN I'LL...
...RUNNING?
CLATTER
HIFUMI ?!
N-NO! STOP IT, HIFUMI!!
I'M NOT THE ONE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR!
I'M GOING TO BE PULLED INTO THAT NIGHT-MARE.
PLEASE HELP ME
ARE YOU THE BAKU ?
COULD THIS BE CHITOSE'S ...?
I DON'T WANT TO GO OVER HERE.
DISTORTION
A RIVER A QUIET

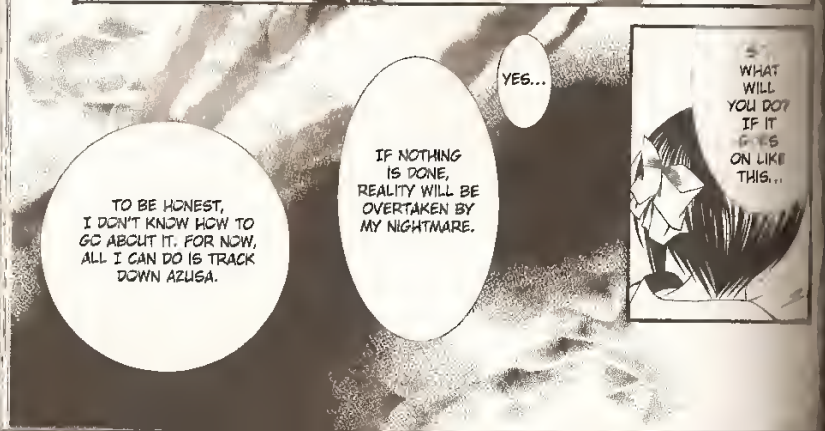
A PERSON LIKE ME DOESN'T DESERVE TO HAVE MY DREAM COME TRUE!
THEN...
I WANT TO BE THE LAST THING YOU SEE!
I WANT MY IMAGE TO BE SCORCHED INTO YOUR EYES AND KEEP THEM FOR MYSELF!!
UMI?
I'M FROM A WEALTHY FAMILY.
I MADE THE PERSON I LOVE THE MOST SUFFER BECAUSE OF IT.
"YOU KEPT ME IN THE DARK FOR YEARS OUT OF PITY!!"
BUT THAT WAS SHALLOW OF ME. I IGNORED THE TRUE FEELINGS OF THE PEOPLE AROUND ME. AND BECAUSE OF THAT...
THE ONLY REASON I PUT UP WITH IT WAS BECAUSE I COULD AFFORD TO IN MY HEART, I KNEW I WAS DIFFERENT FROM EVERYONE ELSE!!
PEOPLE WERE ALWAYS ATTRACTED TO ME BECAUSE OF MY MONEY.


A DREAM MORE WONDERFUL AND CRUEL THAN ANYONE ELSE'S...
A DARK WORLD WHERE VIOLENCE, DECEPTION, SEXUAL ASSAULT AND DEPRAVATION ARE NOTHING SPECIAL.
AZUSA, IN HIS QUEST TO KEEP THE NIGHTMARE GOING, WENT TO THE DELIRIUM TO MAKE IT A REALITY AND LOCKED HIMSELF IN WITH HIS DESIRES.
THE RIVER FLOWS TOWARD THE SEA...
THEN THIS NIGHTMARE THAT ENVELOPS THE CAPITAL IS MINE.
BUT SINCE HE HAS REAPPEARED, AS THE OWNER OF THAT NIGHTMARE, SHOULD HE DECIDE TO MAKE IT COME TRUE...
IT WAS THE IDEAL WORLD THAT I CREATED IN MY DREAMS WHEN I WAS BEING TORTURED IN THE STOREROOM, TO ESCAPE FROM REALITY...
BUT THE DIFFERENCE FROM REALITY WAS SO SEVERE THAT IT TURNED INTO A NIGHTMARE.
AGH ...!
WHAT AM I SAYING?! I DON'T MEAN ANY OF THESE THINGS!!
NO!!
PLEASE... HELP ME!
I'M SO AFRAID OF THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT RIVER..
THIS DISTORTION IS MAKING ME WEIRD!
THE RIVER ...
MY FANTASY DREAMSCAPE...
THE RIVER ...
DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT IT?! EVERYBODY HAS GONE MAD AND WON'T STOP TALKING ABOUT THE RIVER.

I'VE BEEN OKAY... WITH THE PAIN I WAS IN AND WITH HIFUMI ACTING STRANGELY, I HAVEN'T BEEN SLEEPING.
BUT...


YOU...

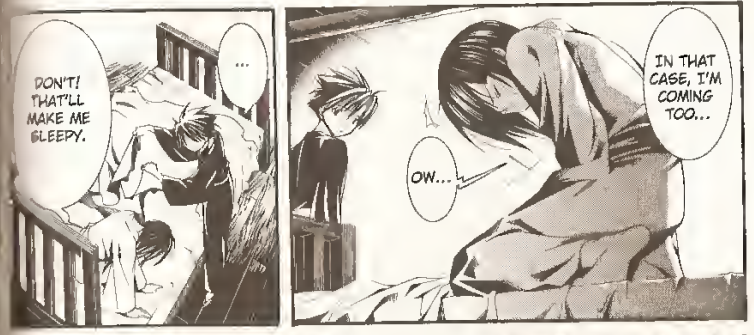
I SEE YOU'RE THE ROOT CAUSE OF IT ALL AGAIN.

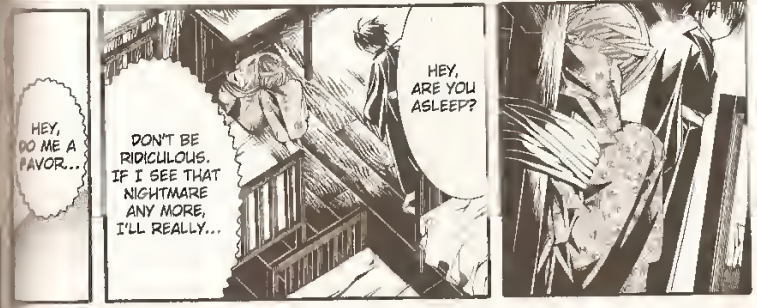

TO BE HONEST, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GO ABOUT IT. FOR NOW, ALL I CAN DO IS TRACK DOWN AZUSA.
IF NOTHING IS DONE, REALITY WILL BE OVERTAKEN BY MY NIGHTMARE.
YES...
WHAT WILL YOU DO? IF IT GOES ON LIKE THIS...

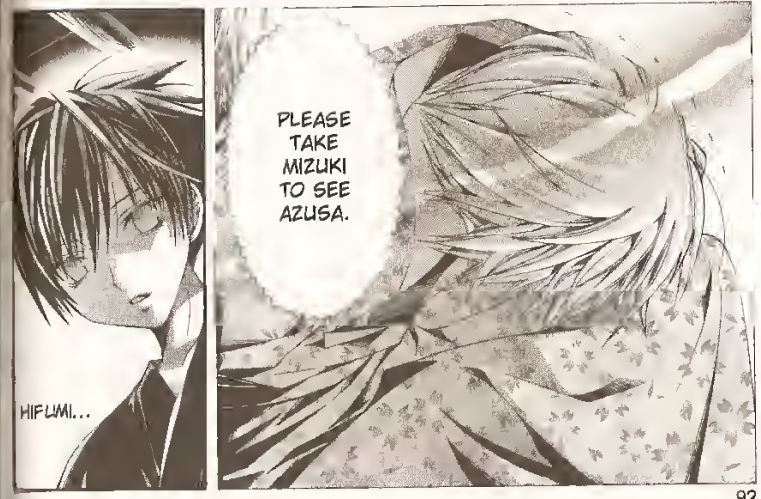
THE NIGHTMARE HAS GOUGED THE DREAMS AND HAS INTRUDED FROM THAT VOID...
ANYBODY WHO EVEN DARES TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF WHAT LIES THERE IS OVERWHELMED BY HIS DEEPEST DARKEST DESIRE.
THIS NIGHTMARE HAS BECOME REAL AND HAS NOW APPEARED TO CAST ITSELF UPON EVERYONE'S DREAMS.

...SO THAT THIS IS NO LONGER MY BURDEN ALONE.
DEEP DOWN INSIDE, I'M GLAD THAT THIS HAPPENED...
JUST RUNNING ...
BUT I'VE JUST BEEN RUNNING FROM IT THIS WHOLE TIME..
THAT'S WHY...
UGH
UH...

I HOPE YOU DIE.
IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT.


DON'T! THAT'LL MAKE ME SLEEPY.
...
OW...
IN THAT CASE, I'M COMING TOO...

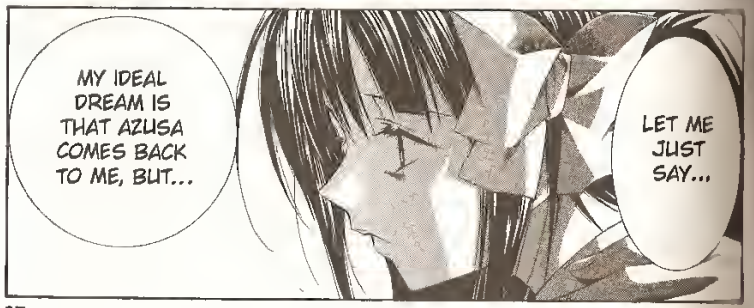

HEY, DO ME A FAVOR...
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS. IF I SEE THAT NIGHTMARE ANY MORE, I'LL REALLY...
HEY, ARE YOU ASLEEP?

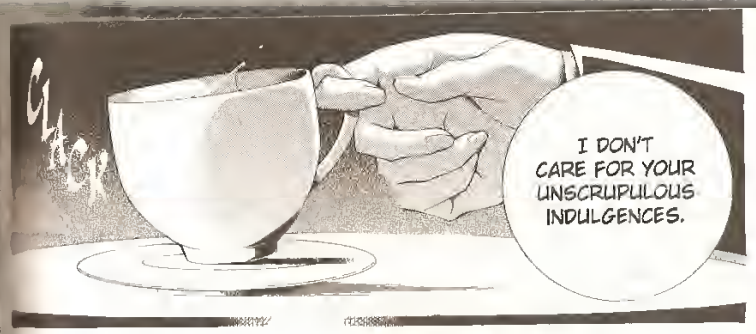

HIFUMI...
PLEASE TAKE MIZUKI TO SEE AZUSA.

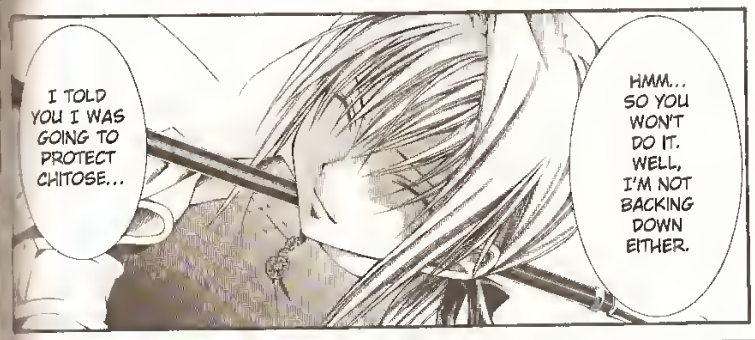
WELL THEN, WHY DON'T YOU GO OUTSIDE AND DINE A LITTLE?
I'D LIKE TO, BUT I PROMISED TO STAY BY CHITOSE...
CUT IT OUT!
OH! THERE'S A WINDUP SCREW ON TSUKI SHIRO'S BACK!
CRASH
WELL, EVEN I CAN'T DENY THAT THE SITUATION PLEASES ME.
HA! THAT SOUNDS AWFULLY CHARITABLE OF YOU. WHAT YOU REALLY WANT IS TO KEEP THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE RIGHT NOW ISN'T IT?
BUT...
THOSE THAT CAN'T HANDLE THE NIGHTMARES ANYMORE WILL BEGIN FANTASIZING...
HA HA HA HA! THIS IS FANTASTIC!
AGH...
IT'S POOLING...
IT'S SO DARK
AGH...
AH...
WAH THE RIVER
I CAN FEEL THE NIGHTMARES ECHOING EVEN FROM THIS DISTANCE!
OH!
WE WE
I CAN'T STAND IT!
I FEEL LIKE I'M GOING TO CRY.

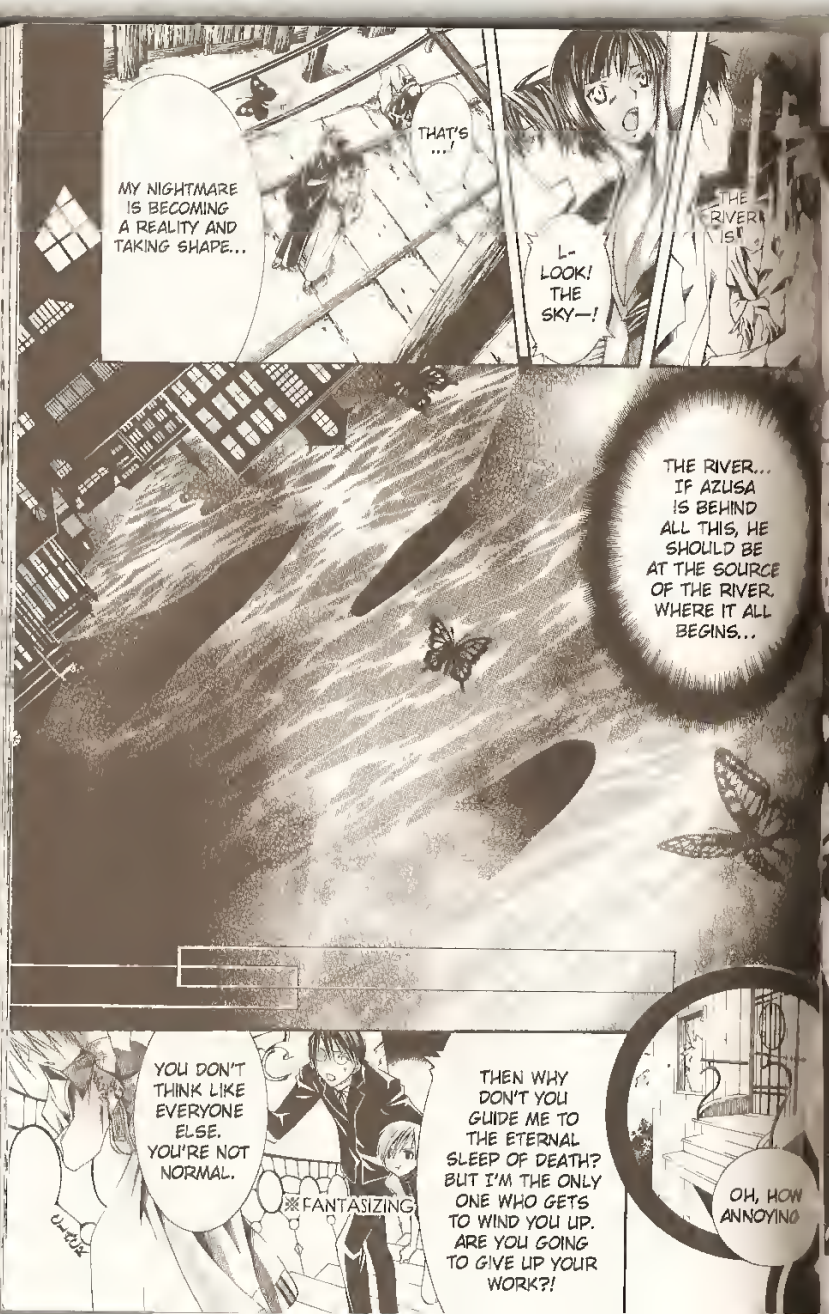
# The Sixty-First Night: Pity

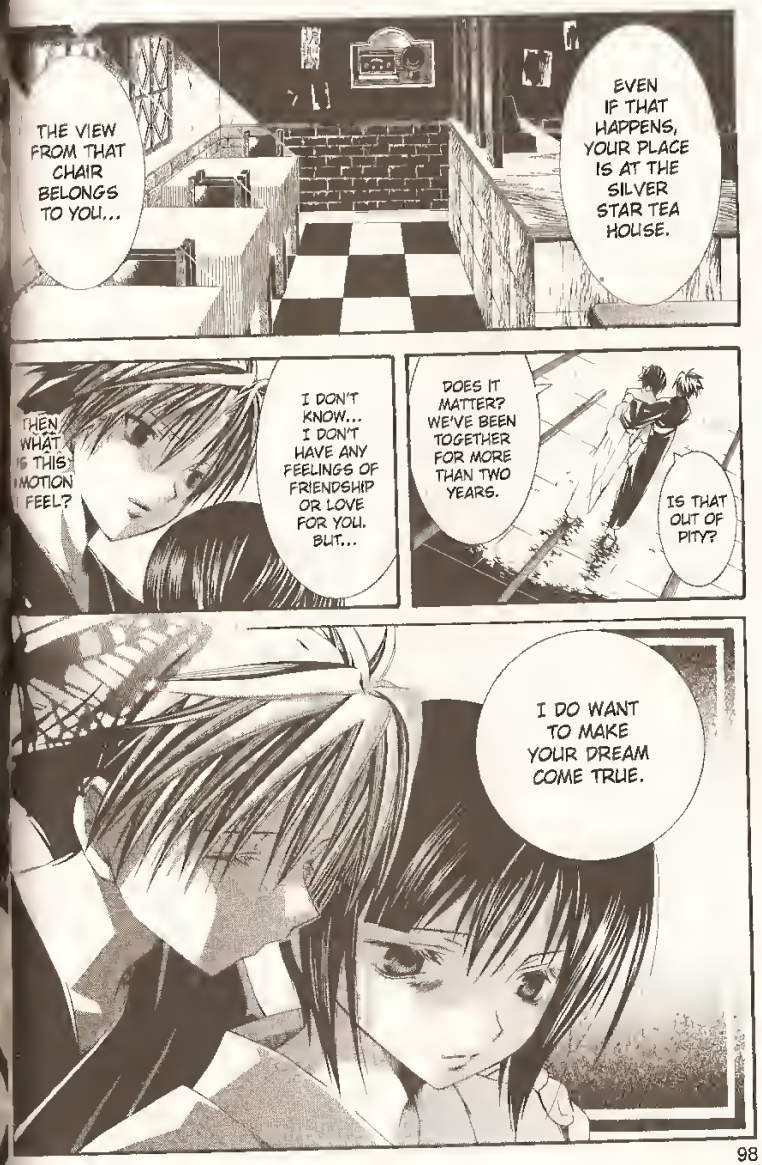
I'M FINE, THE WOUND ISN'T THAT DEEP. IF IT MEANS I CAN SEE AZUSA AGAIN, THIS PAIN ISN'T GOING TO STOP ME.
THE DISTORTION...
HELP ME!...
the river...
MAYBE WE SHOULD GO BACK TO THE HOSPITAL...



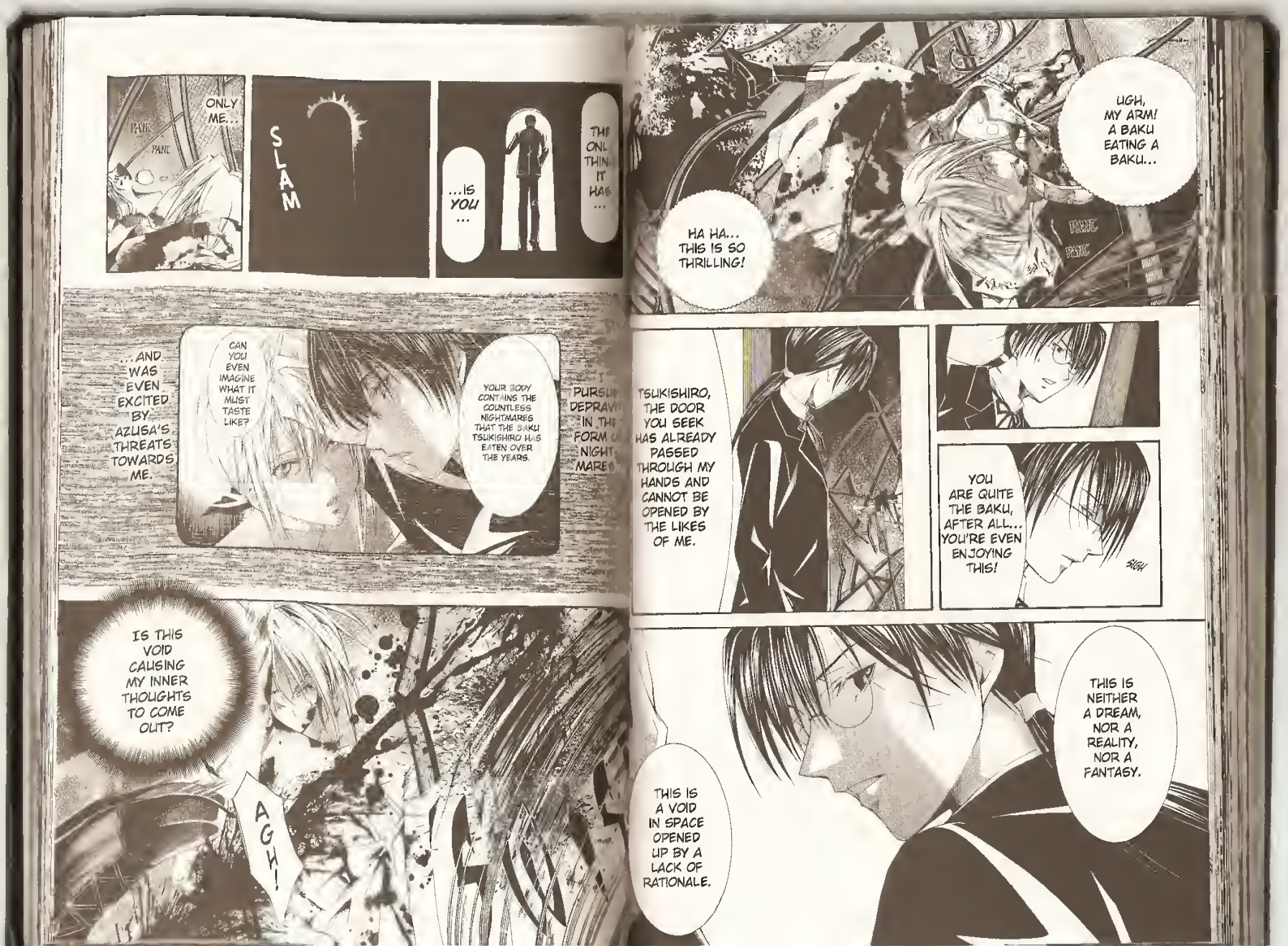




MY NIGHTMARE IS BECOMING A REALITY AND TAKING SHAPE...
THAT'S ...!
L-LOOK! THE SKY—!
THE RIVER IS!
THE RIVER... IF AZUSA IS BEHIND ALL THIS, HE SHOULD BE AT THE SOURCE OF THE RIVER. WHERE IT ALL BEGINS...
YOU DON'T THINK LIKE EVERYONE ELSE. YOU'RE NOT NORMAL.
※FANTASIZING
THEN WHY DON'T YOU GUIDE ME TO THE ETERNAL SLEEP OF DEATH? BUT I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO GETS TO WIND YOU UP. ARE YOU GOING TO GIVE UP YOUR WORK?!
OH, HOW ANNOYING


THE VIEW FROM THAT CHAIR BELONGS TO YOU...
EVEN IF THAT HAPPENS, YOUR PLACE IS AT THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE.
THEN WHAT IS THIS MOTION I FEEL?
I DON'T KNOW... I DON'T HAVE ANY FEELINGS OF FRIENDSHIP OR LOVE FOR YOU. BUT...
DOES IT MATTER? WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER FOR MORE THAN TWO YEARS.
IS THAT OUT OF PITY?
I DO WANT TO MAKE YOUR DREAM COME TRUE.

Ha ha... I wonder who?
It looks like somebody tried to hide the opening.
THIS IS THE ONLY PLACE WHERE THE AIR IS DIFFERENT...
IF I CAN GET PAST KAIRI...
FINE...
WOOSH
THE FUTURE OF THE CAPITAL WILL BE DECIDED IN THERE.
...THEN THIS WORLD WILL BE PLUNGED INTO INFINITE DARKNESS.
CLACK
CLACK
SWOOP
IF YOU REALLY WANTED TO FIX THIS SITUATION, THEN YOU WOULD UNLOCK THAT ONE DOOR IMMEDIATELY...
SMASH
YOU KNOW WHY I REMAINED HERE, RIGHT?
YES, IT'S QUITE AN IMPORTANT DOOR.
SINCE YOU'RE THE KEY.
THE FUTURE OF THE CAPITAL WILL BE DECIDED IN THERE.
OF COURSE..
CLACK
CLACK
YOU PROBABLY ALREADY HAVE AN IDEA OF WHERE THIS DOOR IS, TOO.
IF YOU KNOW THAT MUCH ALREADY, THERE'S NOT MUCH I CAN DO TO STOP YOU.

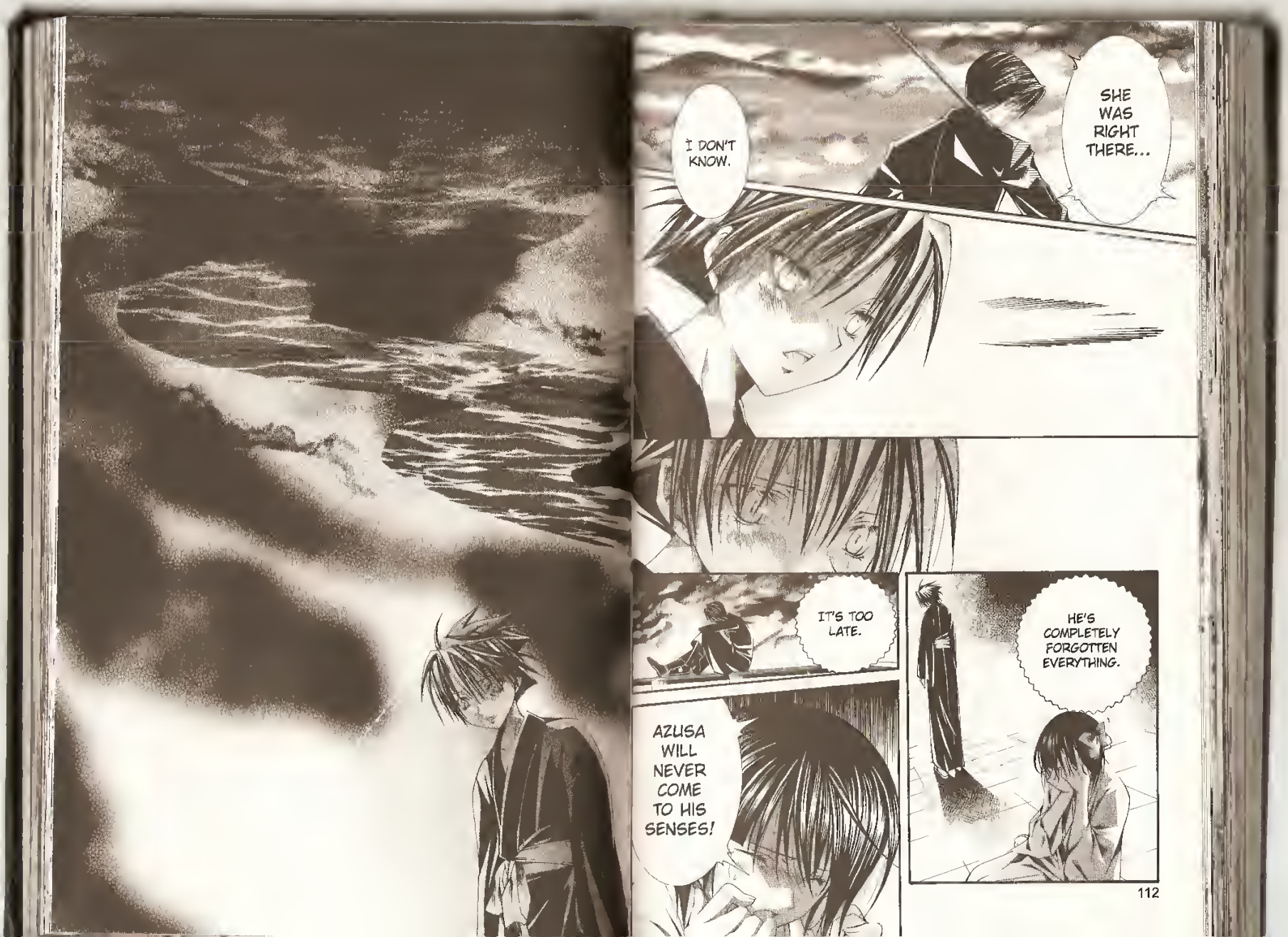
AZUSA!
CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST TASTE LIKE?
YOU'RE A LITTLE DIFFICULT TO EAT LIKE THIS.
BUT, HOW...?
I'M GOING TO BE EATEN!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!
ARGHH!
NO, THIS ISN'T WHAT I WAS LOOKING FOR!!
W-WHAT'S THIS?!
?!
WE SHOULD PART WAYS HERE.
AND YOU WERE SO CLOSE TOO BUT I CAN'T LET YOU MOVE AROUND FREELY. YOU'LL ONLY GET IN THE WAY.
CLACK
YOUR BODY CONTAINS THE COUNTLESS NIGHTMARES THAT THE BAKU TSUKISHIRO HAS EATEN OVER THE YEARS.

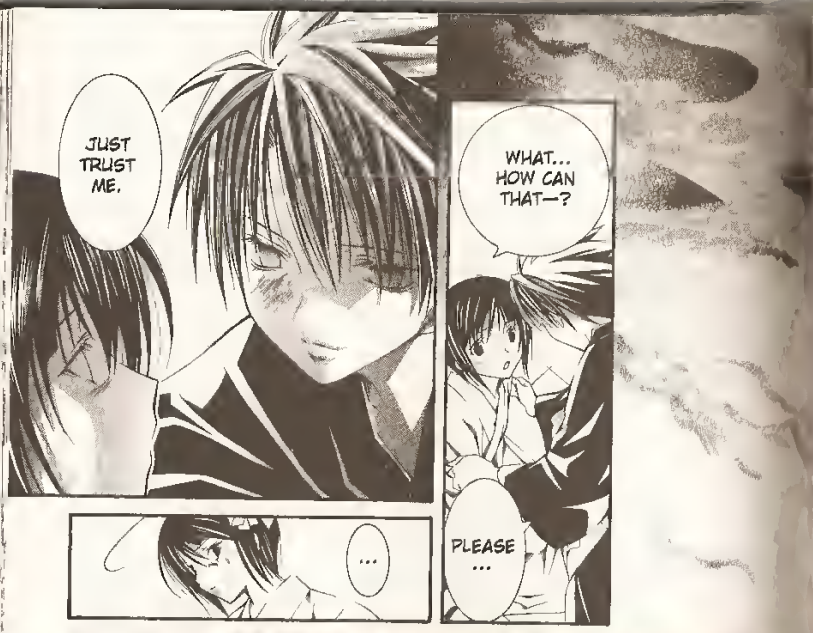

ONLY ME...
PANT
PANT
SLAM
...IS YOU ...
THI ONL THIN IT HAS ...
...AND WAS EVEN EXCITED BY AZUSA'S THREATS TOWARDS ME.
CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST TASTE LIKE?
YOUR BODY CONTAINS THE COUNTLESS NIGHTMARES THAT THE BAKU TSUKISHIRO HAS EATEN OVER THE YEARS.
PURSU DEPRAV IN THE FORM NIGHT MARE
IS THIS VOID CAUSING MY INNER THOUGHTS TO COME OUT?
AGH!
UGH, MY ARM! A BAKU EATING A BAKU...
HA HA... THIS IS SO THRILLING!
PANT
PANT
TSUKISHIRO, THE DOOR YOU SEEK HAS ALREADY PASSED THROUGH MY HANDS AND CANNOT BE OPENED BY THE LIKES OF ME.
YOU ARE QUITE THE BAKU, AFTER ALL... YOU'RE EVEN ENJOYING THIS!
SIGH
THIS IS NEITHER A DREAM, NOR A REALITY, NOR A FANTASY.
THIS IS A VOID IN SPACE OPENED UP BY A LACK OF RATIONALE.

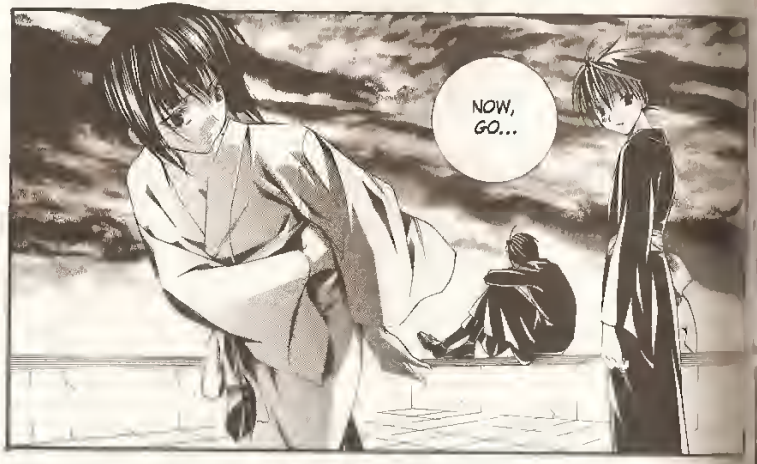
AZUSA... HAVE YOU REALLY FORGOTTEN ME?
WE SHARE SO MANY MEMORIES...
IT'S ME... IT'S MIZUKI. PLEASE, LOOK THIS WAY.
THERE'S SO MUCH I'VE WANTED TO SAY TO YOU BUT NOTHING COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU'RE NOW IN FRONT OF ME..
PLEASE LOOK AT ME...
WHEN WE CONFUSED A MOTH WITH A BUTTERFLY AND LAUGHED SO HARD...
WHY WON'T HE LOOK AT ME?
WON'T YOU BE KIND TO ME ANYMORE?
YOU PATTED ME ON THE HEAD WHEN I CRIED...
SO...
I STILL HAVE IT NOW. I STILL THINK OF YOU.
I COULDN'T USE A HAIRPIN, SO YOU PUT A RIBBON IN MY HAIR.
I'VE BEEN WAITING...
A- AZUSA... AZUSA!
AND I HAD SAID SUCH HORRIBLE THINGS TO YOU AND HIFUMI.
I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED ...

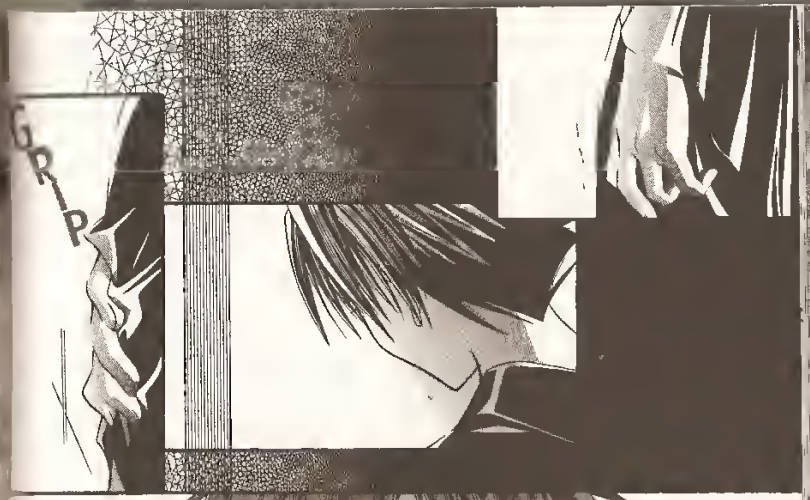
I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MUCH IT HURTS TO NOT HAVE MY EXISTENCE ACKNOWLEDGED!!
I'M SO SORRY...
I'M SO SORRY...
IT JUST MEANS YOU CARE THAT MUCH ABOUT YOUR BROTHER.
WHAT?
DON'T YOU FEEL ANYTHING? EVEN WITH YOUR ONLY SISTER RIGHT HERE IN FRONT OF YOU?
HOW MANY MORE PEOPLE WILL YOU MAKE SUFFER?
AZUSA ..
THANK YOU FOR THE LOVELY NIGHTMARE..
THWAK
BUT I DON'T NEED YOU ANYMORE...
... CHITOSE
STOMP

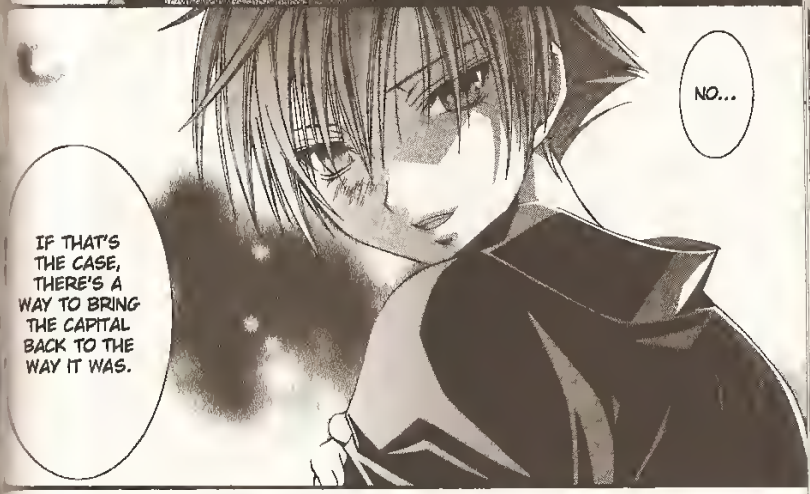
HEH
IS THAT WHAT YOU REALLY FEEL?
WHY WORRY ABOUT THEM? IF THOSE PEOPLE COMMITTED A CRIME, IT'S BECAUSE THEY HAD HARBORED THAT EVIL INTENT ALREADY. IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME...
THAT'S NICE. BUT...
IF THIS IS MY NIGHTMARE, IT'S MY RESPONSIBILITY TO PUT AN END TO THIS.
HURTING HIFUMI'S FEELINGS...
-NVOLVING NNOCENT EOPLE...
AND BESIDES, I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS.
WHY IS PART OF MY MEMORY MISSING? AND WHY DON'T I REMEMBER KASHINA AT ALL?
?!
YOU SHOULD KNOW!
KASHINA? WHO'S THAT?
SHE WAS THE GIRL WITH ME TWO YEARS AGO, AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.
SHE TOOK CARE OF ME DURING THE DAY IN THE STOREROOM.
SO YOU MUST REMEMBER HER AS WELL!
YOU REMEMBER SEEING ME?!
AH!
BAKUS ONLY LIKE THE NIGHT.
I HAVE NO INTEREST IN STORIES THAT HAPPEN DURING THE DAY.


I DON'T KNOW.
SHE WAS RIGHT THERE...
IT'S TOO LATE.
AZUSA WILL NEVER COME TO HIS SENSES!
HE'S COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING.

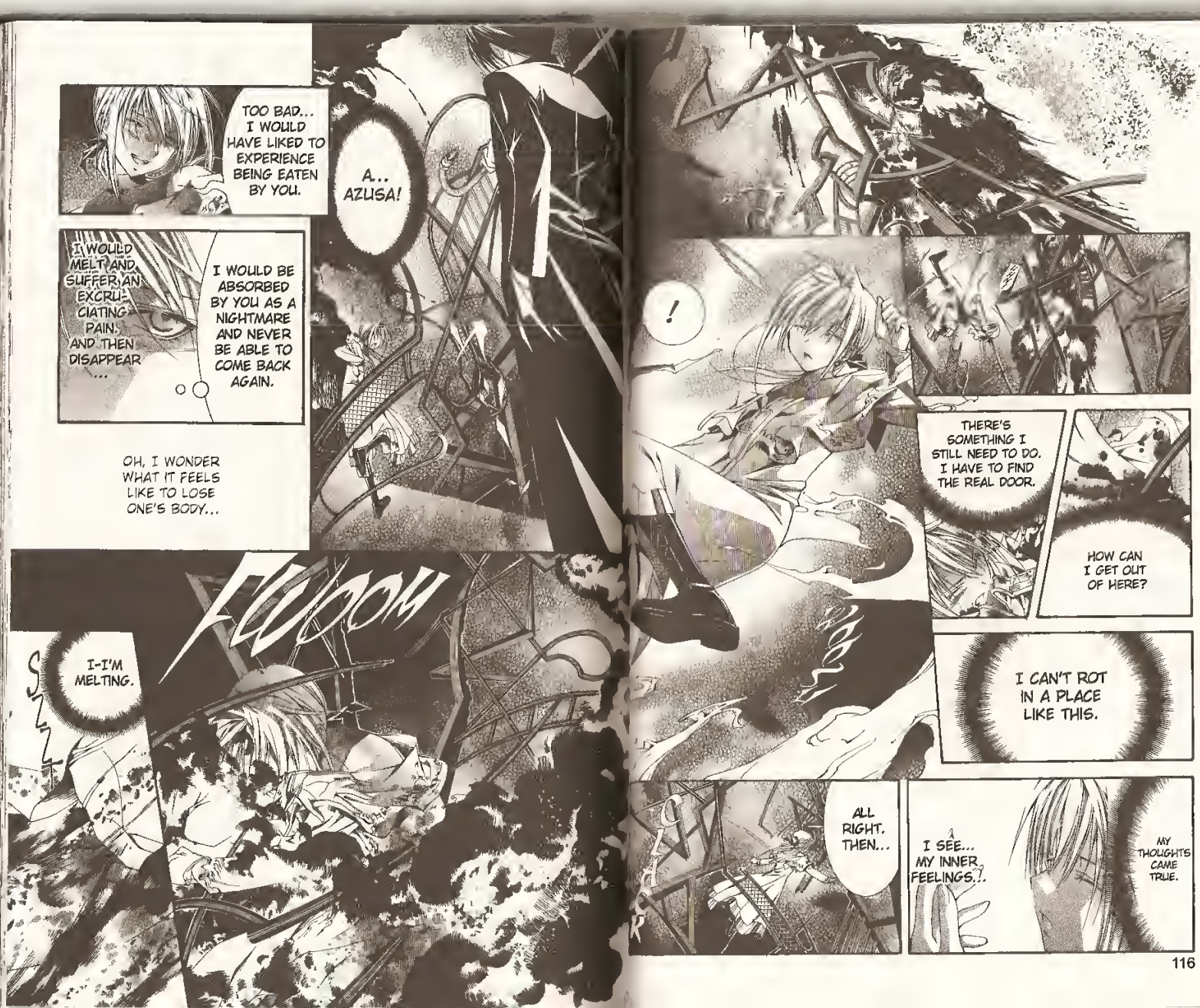

JUST TRUST ME.
WHAT... HOW CAN THAT—?
PLEASE...
...


NOW, GO...


GRIP


NO...
IF THAT'S THE CASE, THERE'S A WAY TO BRING THE CAPITAL BACK TO THE WAY IT WAS.

MIZUKI, LISTEN CAREFULLY...

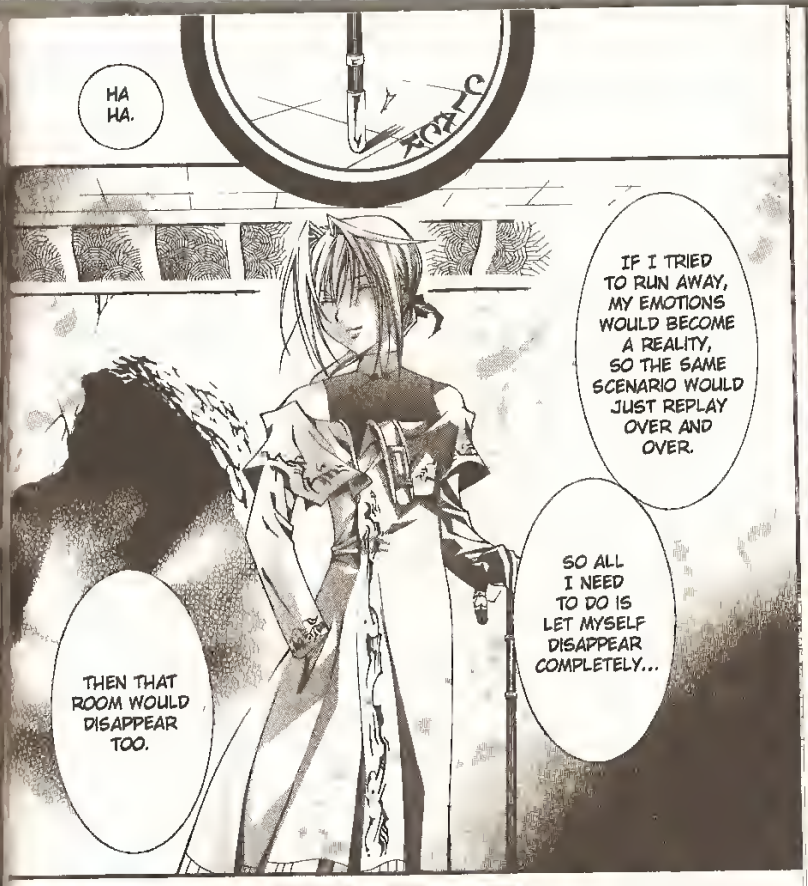

TOO BAD... I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO EXPERIENCE BEING EATEN BY YOU.
A... AZUSA!
I WOULD MELT AND SUFFER AN EXCRUCIATING PAIN, AND THEN DISAPPEAR...
I WOULD BE ABSORBED BY YOU AS A NIGHTMARE AND NEVER BE ABLE TO COME BACK AGAIN.
OH, I WONDER WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO LOSE ONE'S BODY...
FLOOM
I-I'M MELTING.
!
THERE'S SOMETHING I STILL NEED TO DO. I HAVE TO FIND THE REAL DOOR.
HOW CAN I GET OUT OF HERE?
I CAN'T ROT IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.
ALL RIGHT. THEN...
I SEE... MY INNER FEELINGS...
MY THOUGHTS CAME TRUE.

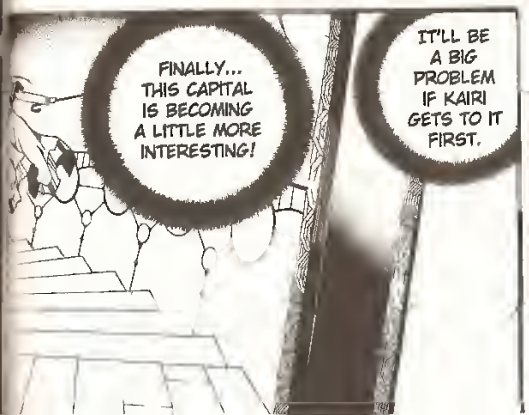
JUST LIKE THIS...
JUST LIKE THIS...

I CAN'T DENY THIS EMOTION.
AS A BAKU, I CAN'T CONTROL THIS EXCITEMENT.
AH! I CAN'T ...!
JUST LIKE THIS...
DAMMIT... IT LOOKS LIKE I'LL EITHER HAVE TO DESTROY MYSELF OR BE EATEN BY AZUSA.

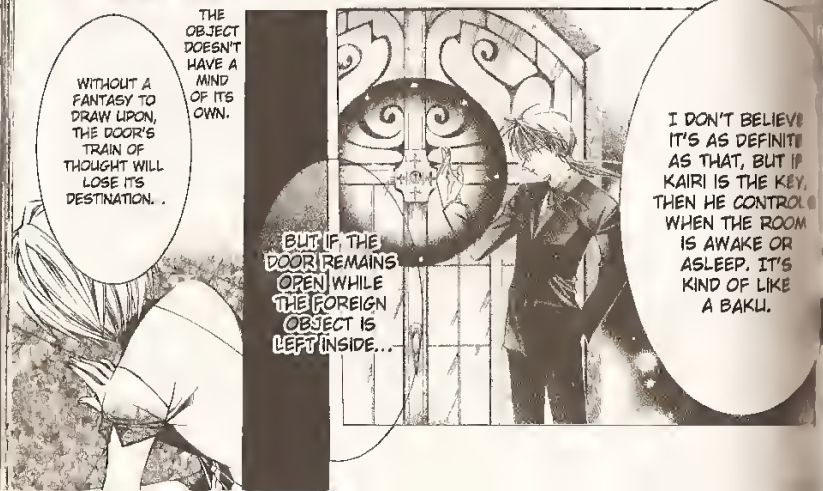
# THE SIXTY-SECOND NIGHT: DOOR

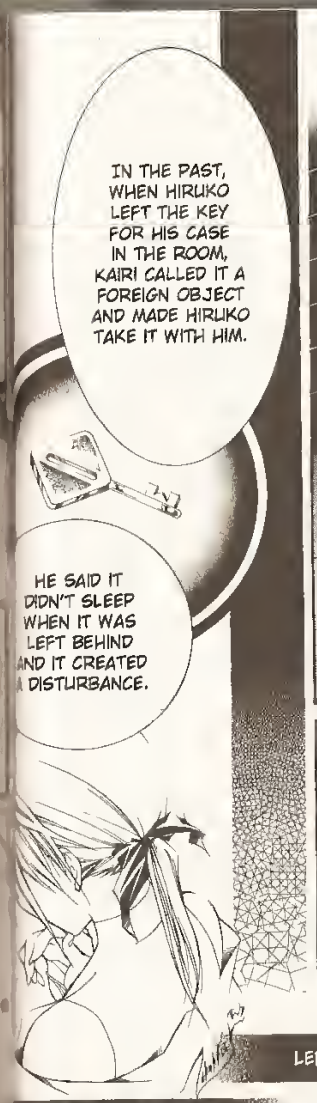
MAKE UP YOUR MIND!
WHAK
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU CAN CATEGORIZE IT LIKE THAT.
Sometimes it seems like a long time, sometimes it seems like a short time
WAIT UP! YOU KNOW WHERE IT IS, RIGHT?! YOU'VE BEEN LIVING HERE THE WHOLE TIME.
CHITOSE, WHERE ARE YOU?
CHITOSE!

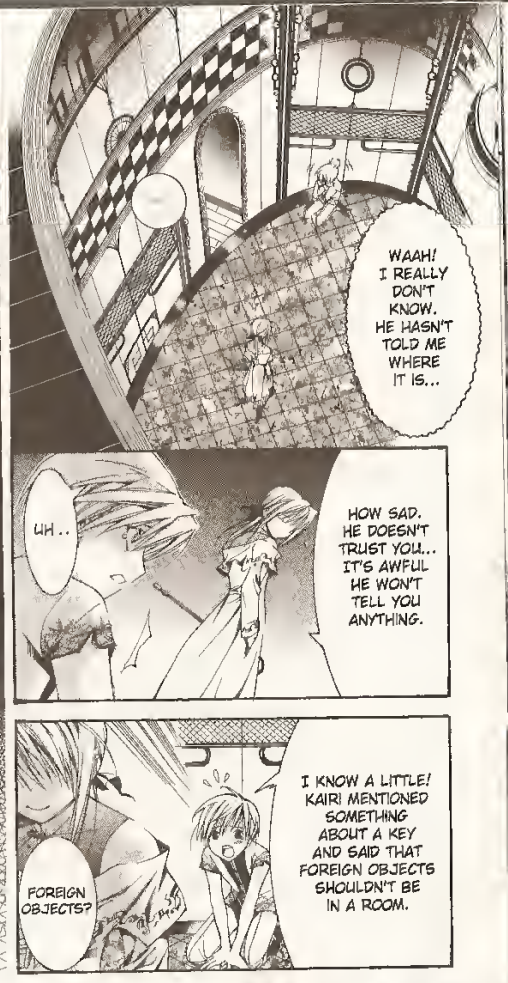

HA HA.
IF I TRIED TO RUN AWAY, MY EMOTIONS WOULD BECOME A REALITY, SO THE SAME SCENARIO WOULD JUST REPLAY OVER AND OVER.
SO ALL I NEED TO DO IS LET MYSELF DISAPPEAR COMPLETELY...
THEN THAT ROOM WOULD DISAPPEAR TOO.



IT USES THE PERSON IN THE ROOM'S FANTASY AND CREATES A REALITY OUT OF IT.
WHEN HUMANS CREATE SOMETHING, THEY THINK ABOUT HOW OTHER OBJECTS RELATE TO THEM
HUH?
OH, I SEE... SO THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS.
TAP
THE ROOM IS THE SAME WAY.
ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE ROOM HAS A CONSCIOUSNESS OF ITS OWN?


WITHOUT A FANTASY TO DRAW UPON, THE DOOR'S TRAIN OF THOUGHT WILL LOSE ITS DESTINATION. .
THE OBJECT DOESN'T HAVE A MIND OF ITS OWN.
BUT IF THE DOOR REMAINS OPEN WHILE THE FOREIGN OBJECT IS LEFT INSIDE...
I DON'T BELIEVE IT'S AS DEFINITE AS THAT, BUT IF KAIRI IS THE KEY, THEN HE CONTROLS WHEN THE ROOM IS AWAKE OR ASLEEP. IT'S KIND OF LIKE A BAKU.


IN THE PAST, WHEN HIRUKO LEFT THE KEY FOR HIS CASE IN THE ROOM, KAIRI CALLED IT A FOREIGN OBJECT AND MADE HIRUKO TAKE IT WITH HIM.
HE SAID IT DIDN'T SLEEP WHEN IT WAS LEFT BEHIND AND IT CREATED A DISTURBANCE.
DIDN'T SLEEP...
LEFT BEHIND...

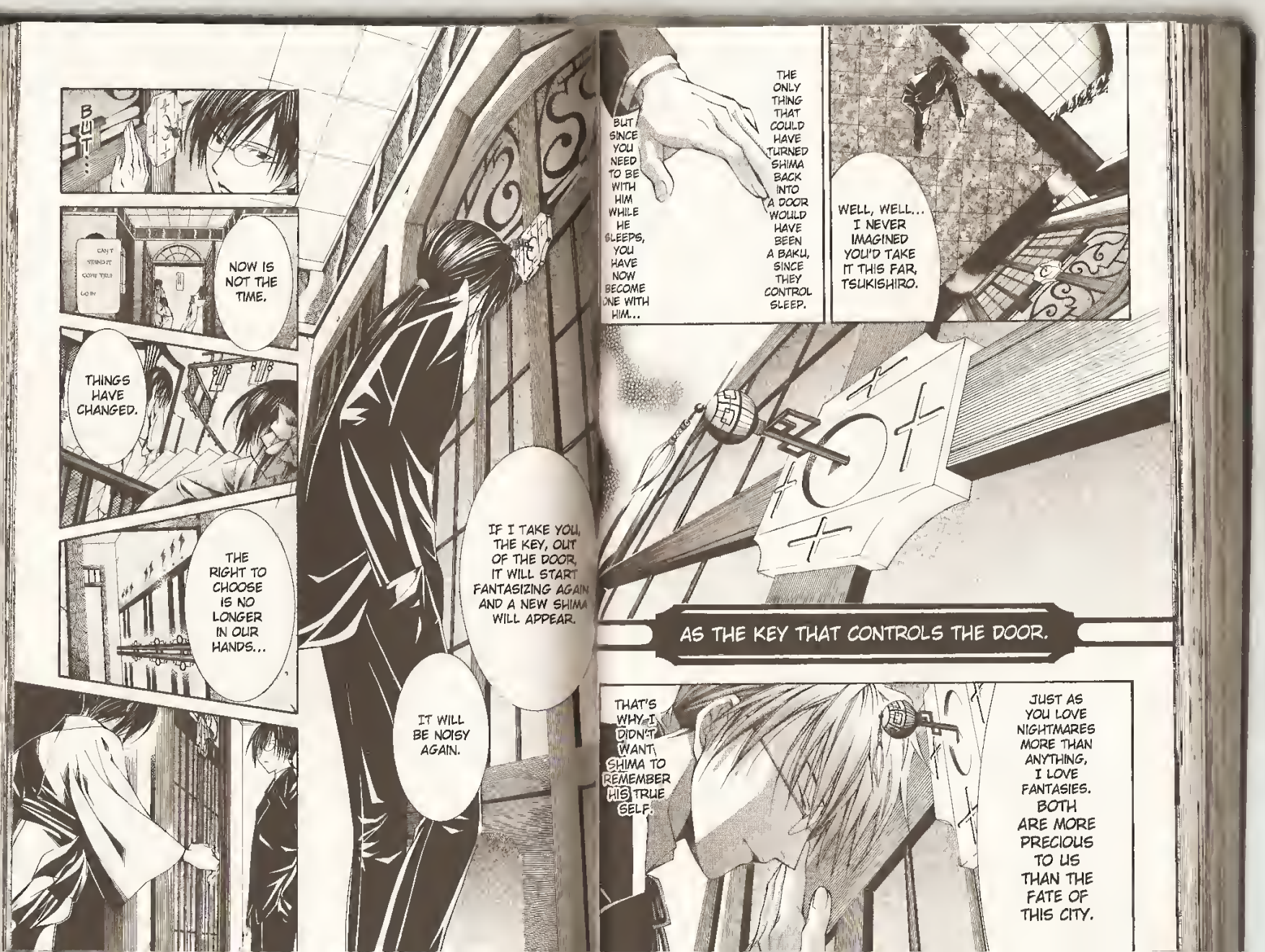

WAAH! I REALLY DON'T KNOW. HE HASN'T TOLD ME WHERE IT IS...
UH..
HOW SAD. HE DOESN'T TRUST YOU... IT'S AWFUL HE WON'T TELL YOU ANYTHING.
FOREIGN OBJECTS?
I KNOW A LITTLE! KAIRI MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT A KEY AND SAID THAT FOREIGN OBJECTS SHOULDN'T BE IN A ROOM.
FOREIGN OBJECT...

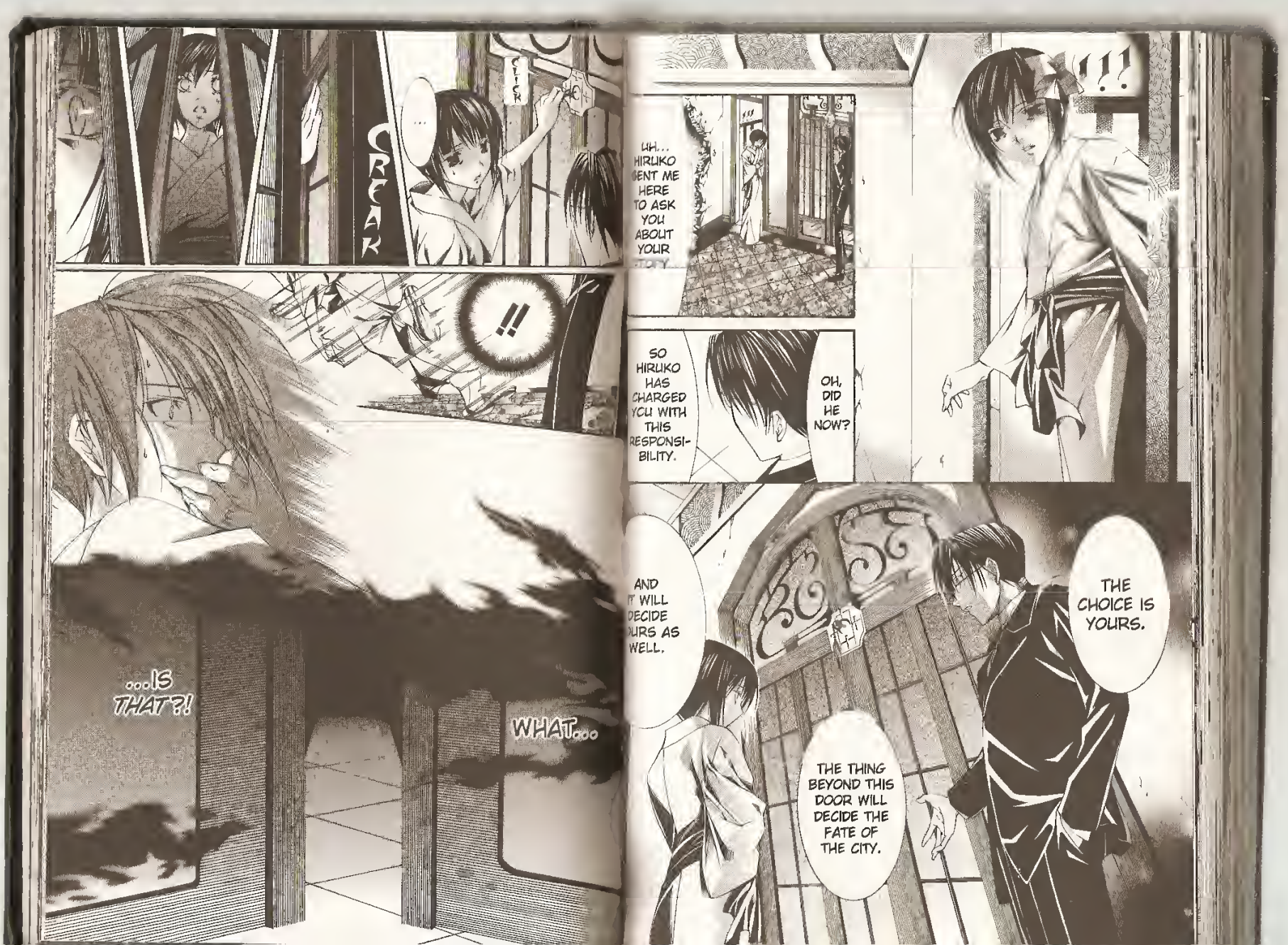
"TSUKISHIRO, THE DOOR YOU SEEK HAS ALREADY PASSED THROUGH MY HANDS AND CANNOT BE OPENED BY THE LIKES OF ME.
THIS IS A VOID IN SPACE OPENED UP BY A LACK OF RATIONALE."

SLEEP. YOU'VE NEVER GONE TO SLEEP, HAVE YOU?
JUST WHAT I THOUGHT.
YOU'RE LACKING SOMETHING CRUCIAL THAT SEPARATES ONE DAY FROM ANOTHER.
!!
THAT'S BECAUSE...
YOU ARE THE DOOR.
THE ONLY INHABITANT OF THIS BUILDING BESIDES KAIRI IS YOU... WHY ARE YOU HERE? HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE?
?!
I...
I'M HERE BECAUSE I WAS HERE...
WHEN I NOTICED, IT WAS ALREADY THE NEXT DAY...
THAT'S ALL THERE IS!!
IT'S PROBABLY FORGOTTEN THAT IT'S A DOOR.
IF KAIRI CAN'T OPEN IT EVEN THOUGH HE IS THE KEY, THEN, THAT MEANS IT'S NO LONGER TAKING THE SHAPE OF A DOOR. AND IT PROBABLY...
AND EVENTUALLY IT WILL REVERT BACK TOWARDS ITSELF...
...AND HAS BEGUN FANTASIZING THAT IT IS A HUMAN.

KAIRI!
KAIRI!...
I CAN'T LEAVE KAIRI BEHIND!
BUT THAT'S ALL OVER NOW. I'LL STOP THAT WAYWARD TRAIN OF THOUGHT RIGHT NOW.
NO...
NO...
YOU DON'T SLEEP, SO YOU CONTINUE TO FANTASIZE. YOU'VE FORGOTTEN YOUR TRUE PURPOSE AND BECOME *HUMAN*.
AT THE SAME TIME, SINCE YOU LOST YOUR CONSCIOUSNESS AS A *DOOR*, IT'S NOW BECOME A VOID IN SPACE.
NO...
SLEEP NOW ...

CLICK
WELCOME HOME, SHIMA.
YOU'VE RETURNED TO YOUR TRUE PLACE.
TOO BA—
WHAT—?! MY BODY...
SWISH
HA HA.... KAIRI WAS PROTECTING YOU BY NOT TELLING YOU THE TRUTH.
CAN'T MOVE
HEY...!
WHAT IS...
GOING
ON


BUT...
CAN'T STAND IT
COME TIRED
GO IN
NOW IS NOT THE TIME.
THINGS HAVE CHANGED.
THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE IS NO LONGER IN OUR HANDS...
IF I TAKE YOU, THE KEY, OUT OF THE DOOR, IT WILL START FANTASIZING AGAIN AND A NEW SHIMA WILL APPEAR.
IT WILL BE NOISY AGAIN.
BUT SINCE YOU NEED TO BE WITH HIM WHILE HE SLEEPS, YOU HAVE NOW BECOME ONE WITH HIM...
THE ONLY THING THAT COULD HAVE TURNED SHIMA BACK INTO A DOOR WOULD HAVE BEEN A BAKU, SINCE THEY CONTROL SLEEP.
WELL, WELL... I NEVER IMAGINED YOU'D TAKE IT THIS FAR, TSUKISHIRO.
AS THE KEY THAT CONTROLS THE DOOR.
THAT'S WHY I DIDN'T WANT SHIMA TO REMEMBER HIS TRUE SELF.
JUST AS YOU LOVE NIGHTMARES MORE THAN ANYTHING, I LOVE FANTASIES.
BOTH ARE MORE PRECIOUS TO US THAN THE FATE OF THIS CITY.

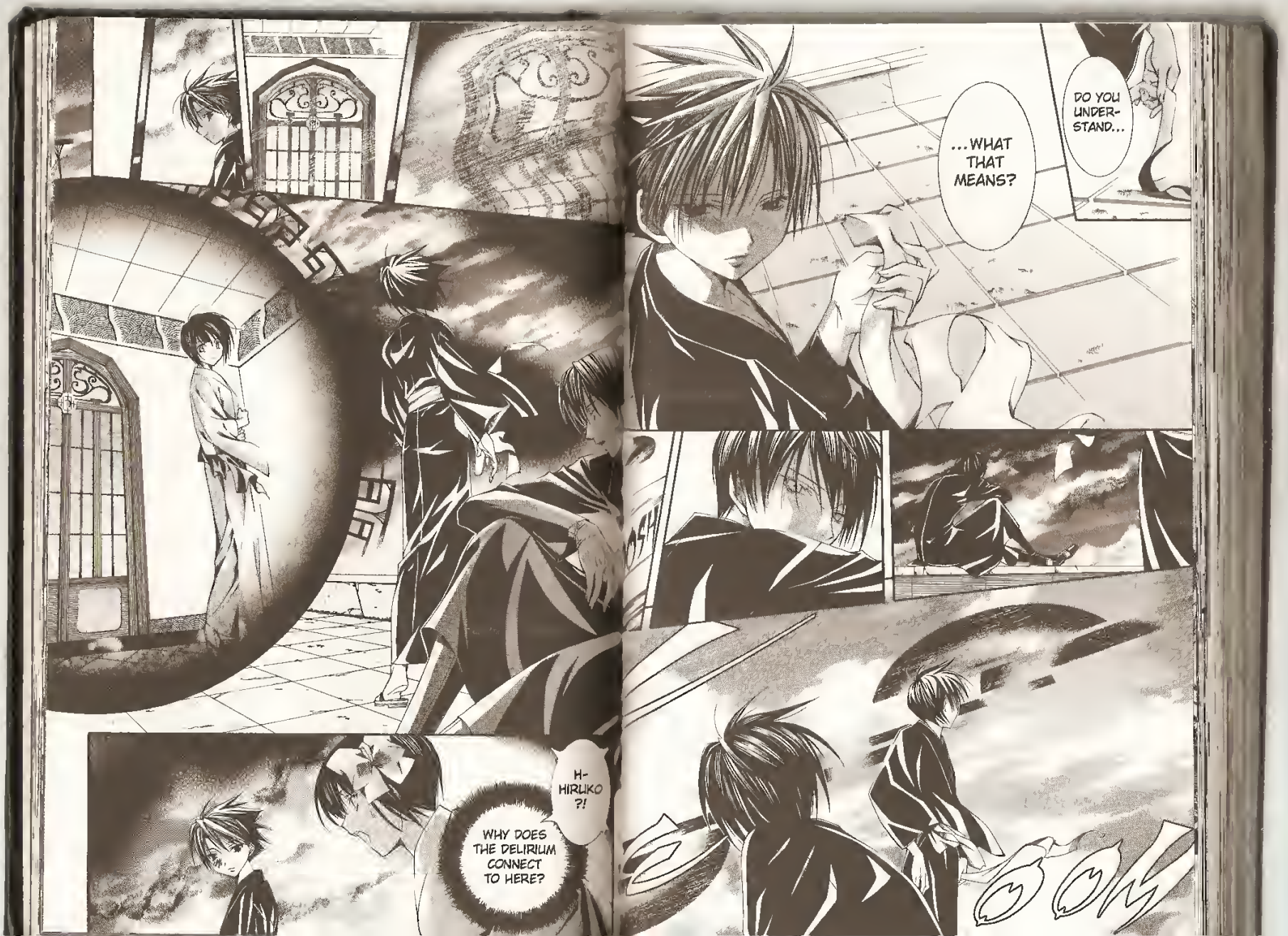

CREAK
CLICK
...
!!
...IS THAT?!
WHAT...
!!!
UH... HIRUKO SENT ME HERE TO ASK YOU ABOUT YOUR STORY.
OH, DID HE NOW?
SO HIRUKO HAS CHARGED YOU WITH THIS RESPONSIBILITY.
AND IT WILL DECIDE YOURS AS WELL.
THE CHOICE IS YOURS.
THE THING BEYOND THIS DOOR WILL DECIDE THE FATE OF THE CITY.

HA ... HA HA ...
HEE ... HA HA HA ...
NOOOOO!!
KASHINA ...
NO...
...
SLUMP
KASHINA ...
UHN...
AH...

NIGHTMARES ARE FALLING FROM THE SEA.
AZUSA ...
THERE IS NO TIME LEFT.
I KNOW WHY PARTS OF MY MEMORY WERE MISSING, AND WHY I DIDN'T REMEMBER KASHINA.
I UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING NOW.

UH...
UHN...
SHALL WE GO, THEN?

"AT NIGHT, I COULD ONLY WATCH OVER YOU FROM THE SHADOWS AS THEY HAD TOLD ME TO. I WAS A USELESS DOLL."
"THEY ONLY GAVE ME PERMISSION DURING THE DAY."
THE MEMORIES I HAVE ARE ONLY OF THE NIGHTTIME WHEN I WAS BEING ABUSED
"I HAVE NO INTEREST IN STORIES THAT HAPPEN DURING THE DAY."
EVERYTHING WAS CREATED BASED ON THE MEMORIES OF YOU AND THE FIRST BAKU.
"BAKUS ONLY LIKE THE NIGHT."
AND BECAUSE OF THAT I DIDN'T HAVE ANY OTHER MEMORIES I NEVER QUESTIONED WHY THAT WAS
NOR ABOUT KASHINA AND WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE DAY...
NOR ABOUT MY REAL SISTER..
"SHE'S A BRAVE, KIND PERSON."
THAT'S RIGHT. IT WASN'T THAT YOU HAD FORGOTTEN.
IT'S BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T KNOW, AZUSA.
TWO YEARS AGO, SHE WAS DEFINITELY THERE.
SHE WAS HIDDEN FROM YOUR VIEW BECAUSE OF THE RUBBLE.
...WHY SHE DIDN'T BECOME PART OF MY MEMORY, EITHER.
AND ...
THAT'S WHY SHE WASN'T IN YOUR MEMORY.


DO YOU UNDER-STAND...
...WHAT THAT MEANS?
H-HIRUKO ?!
WHY DOES THE DELIRIUM CONNECT TO HERE?

# THE SIXTY-THIRD NIGHT: RETURN

NO MORE.. I...
I..
I CAN'T ..
BUT I CAN'T DO IT ANY-MORE ...
IN ORDER TO PROTECT MYSELF, I BELIEVED THE MEMORIES I MADE UP WERE REAL..
THAT THING BEYOND THAT DOOR IS THE ONE TRUTH I CANNOT RUN FROM.
AND...
SEEING YOU AGAIN HAS MADE IT ALL COME BACK TO ME...
I'VE REMEMBERED EVERYTHING.

WH... WHO IS IT?! IS IT SOMEBODY FROM THE KUROSU FAMILY?
LET ME DIE..
YOU'RE NOT THE BAKU THAT I KNOW.
YOU WERE WATCHING OVER ME FROM AFAR IN REALITY AND CLOSE BY IN MY DREAMS BUT...
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE
..BECAUSE YOU ARE MY MEANS OF DESTRUCTION.
THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE...
HA HA
HOW FOOLISH I'VE BEEN. I'M ASHAMED OF MYSELF.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN LIBERATED AT THAT MOMENT...
...BUT I STOPPED TIME FOR MYSELF.
SINCE THAT DAY TWO YEARS AGO...

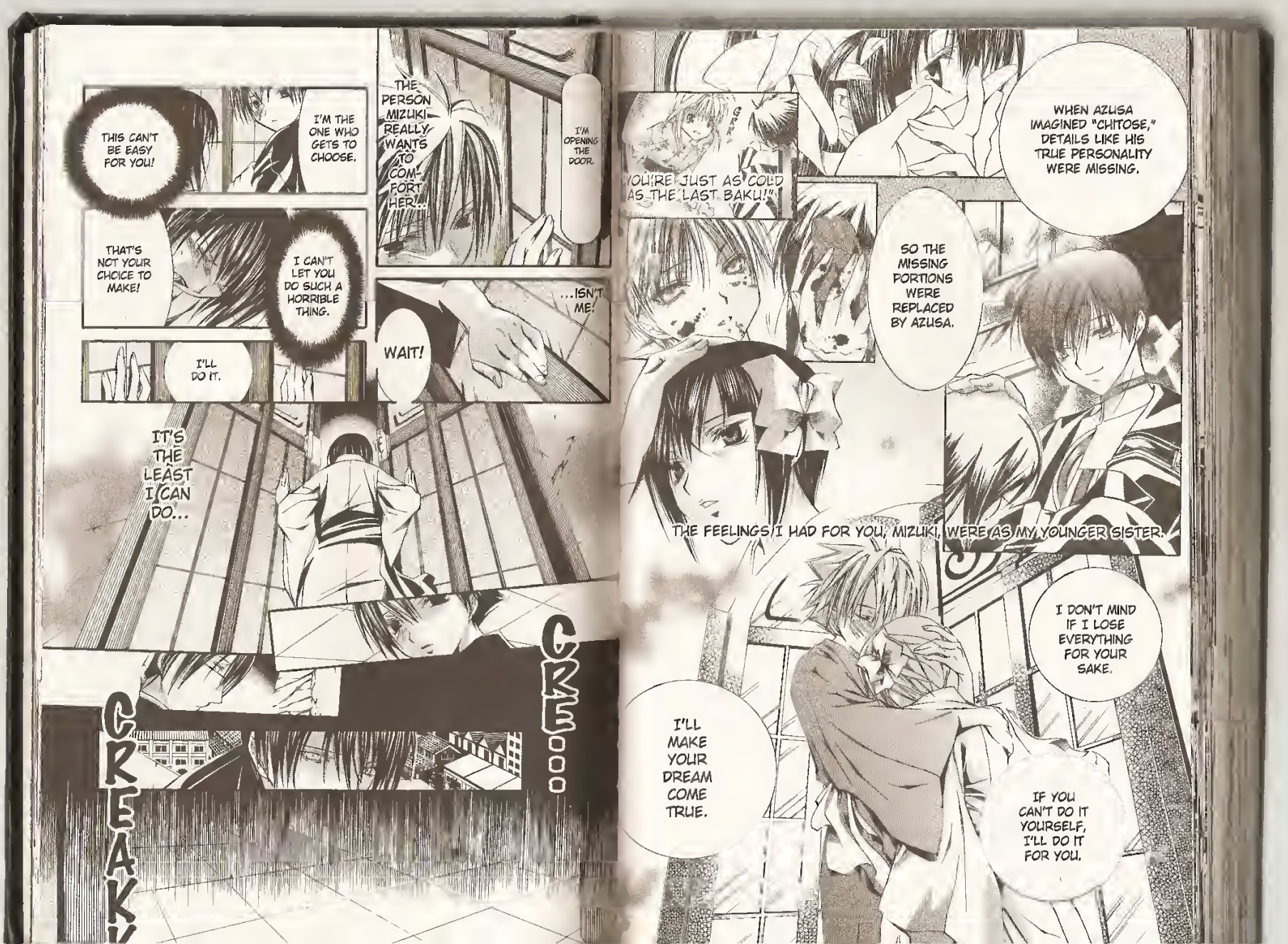
THAT'S WHY I'VE COME FOR YOU.
WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT? WHAT IS A BAKU?
RUMBLE
AN AFTER-SHOCK!
CRACK
CHITOSE!

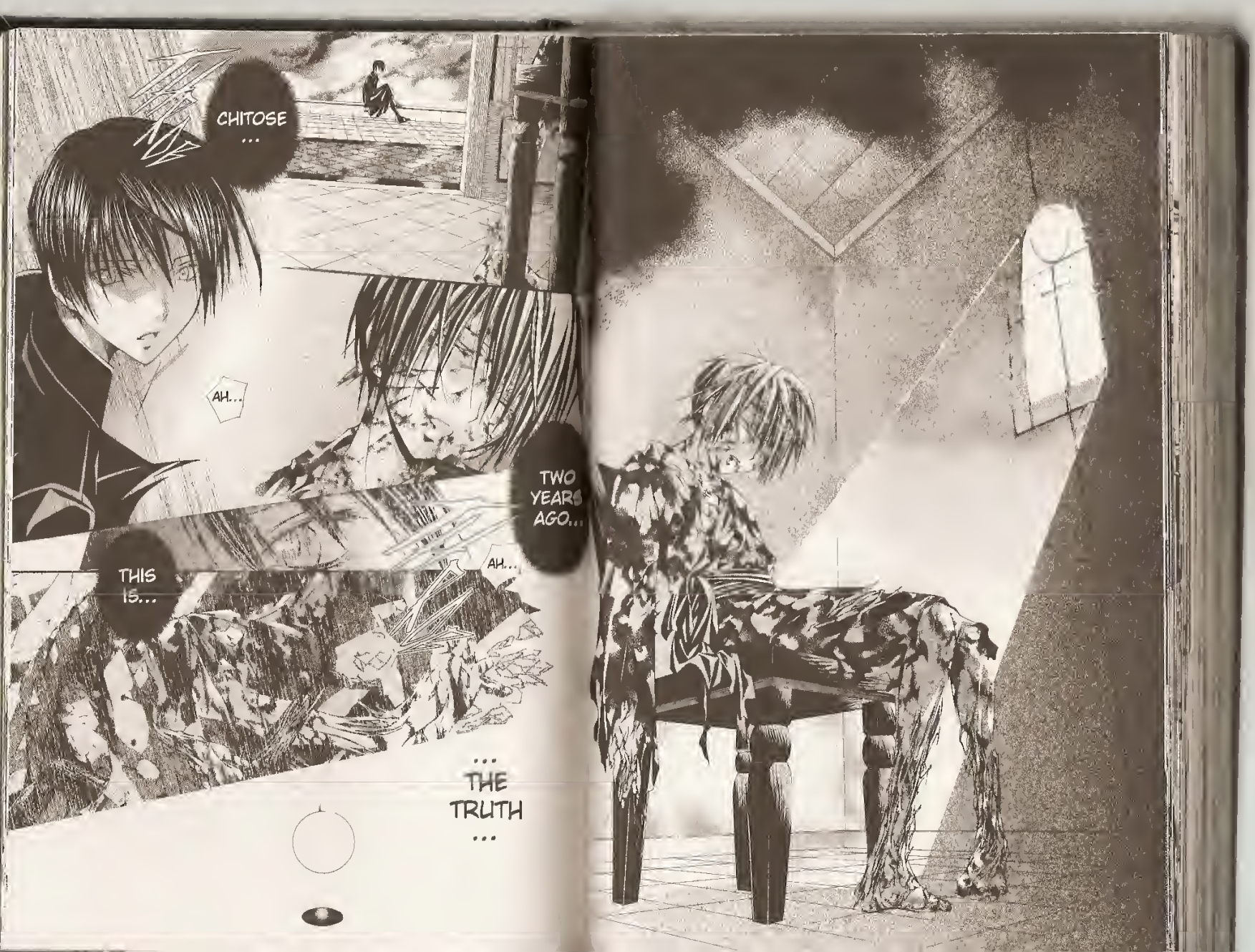
H...
HIRUKO...! HIRUKO...
...
ALREADY DIED THAT DAY TWO YEARS AGO.
I COULDN'T ACCEPT THAT REALITY. BECAUSE...
...THAT MEANS I WOULD BECOME HIS REPLACEMENT!
THEY WOULD TORTURE ME AS THEIR NEXT TOY!
BECAUSE IF CHITOSE DIED...
I CAN'T EVER LET THAT HAPPEN...
HA HA. .
NO WAY.

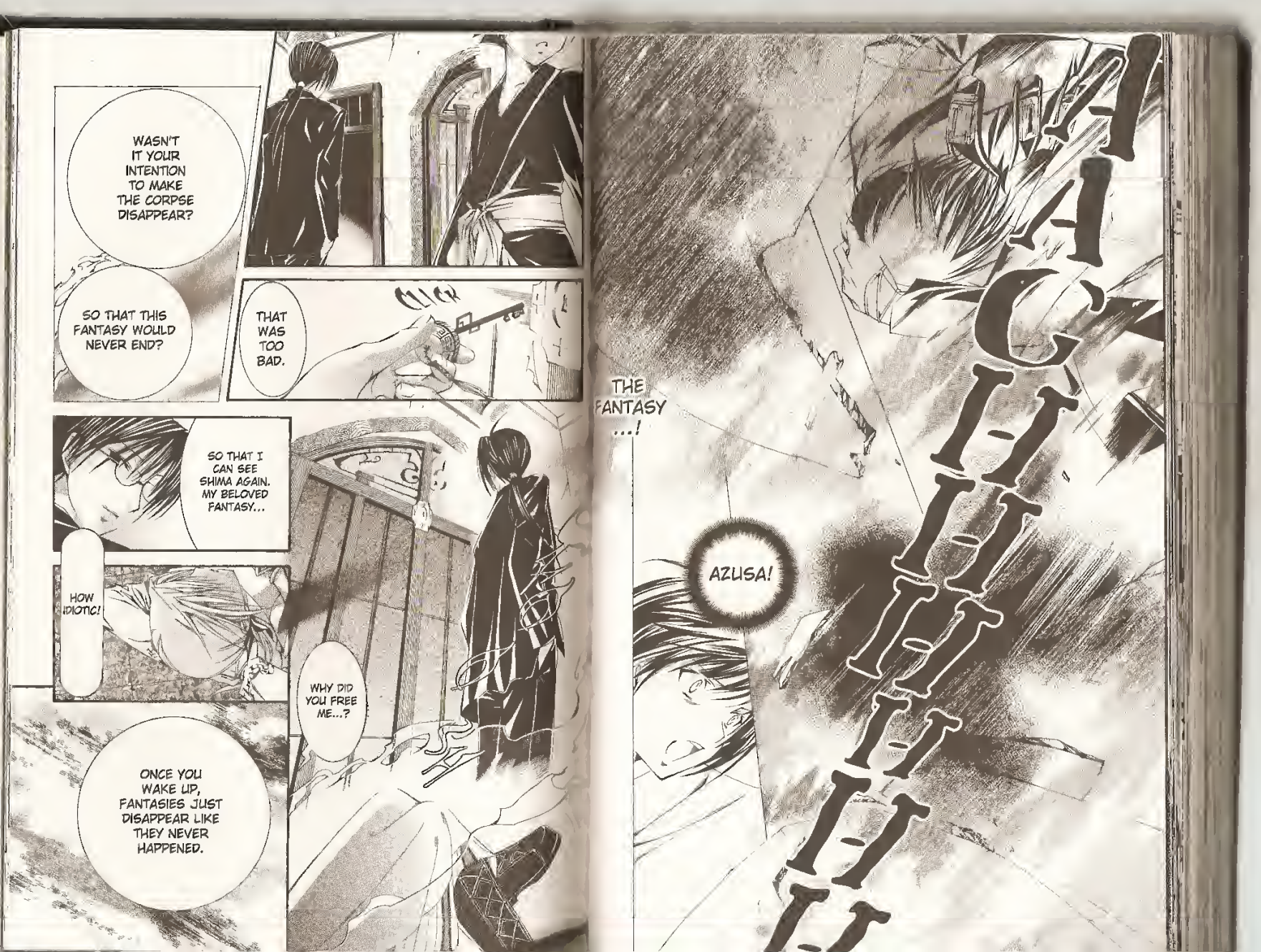
I TOLD YOU THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE, DIDN'T I? YOU ARE THE MEANS OF MY DESTRUCTION
THE NIGHTMARE BORN FROM YOUR FANTASIES WAS SUPPOSED TO EAT ME, AND YOU WOULD BECOME THE NEW BAKU.
DON'T YOU GET IT? I HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE.
YOUR TRAGIC LIFE EXISTED FOR THIS DAY. YOU'RE ONLY ALLOWED TO END IT FOR THIS PURPOSE.
YOUR DEMISE AS A HUMAN IS THE BEGINNING OF YOUR LIFE AS BAKU
AS LONG AS I EXIST, THERE IS NO OTHER POSSIBLE CONCLUSION FOR YOUR LIFE.
THE DELIRIUM WILL MAKE IT COME TRUE
LET'S GO
LET'S WELCOME YOUR DEMISE, AND THE ETERNITY BEYOND THAT.
I AM HIM, AND HE IS ME.
CHITOSE IS SUPPOSED TO BE MY REPLACEMENT.
THERE IS NO LIFE THAT CAN END WITHOUT ME.
SEE...
ETERNITY..
ETERNITY...
SO...
I'LL GET SOME WATER AND WAIT FOR YOU.
... HE WILL CONTINUE TO EXIST TOO.
AS LONG AS I EXIST ...

"CHITOSE IS ALIVE AND IS HAVING THAT NIGHTMARE."
YES, PEOPLE LIKE YOU.
I WAS LIKE AZUSA. I COULDN'T ACCEPT THE REALITY AND CLUNG TO HIS WORDS IN ORDER TO DELUDE MYSELF.
THE FEAR OF MY PAST...
...STAYED WITH ME...
BY CLINGING TO THE ILLUSION THAT CHITOSE WAS STILL ALIVE...
...EVEN THOUGH MY TORMENTOR, KUROSU, IS NO LONGER HERE.
THAT DAY YOU SHUT OFF YOUR MEMORY AND BEGAN BELIEVING IN THAT FANTASY.
YOU THREW YOURSELF INTO THE NIGHTMARE THAT HAD BECOME A REALITY IN THAT ROOM.
BUT NOW I CAN SAY GOODBYE
I'M FREE NOW
OF KUROSU... AND OF MY FANTASY.
ME?
I CREATED THIS NIGHTMARE?
AS FOR ME...
IT ONLY APPEARS IN FRONT OF THOSE WHO ARE DELUDED.
ONLY THOSE WHO HARBOR DELUSIONS AND FANTASIES CAN FIND THEIR WAY TO THE DELIRIUM.
FANTASY ...
HEH... I WAS FANTA-SIZING?

YOU'LL DISAP-PEAR TOO!
WAIT! BUT IF YOU DO THAT, YOU'LL—!
IF WE SHOW AZUSA WHAT LIES BEYOND THAT DOOR, THE NIGHTMARES AND EVIL THOUGHTS THAT HAVE CREPT INTO PEOPLE'S MINDS WILL GO AWAY.
!
BUT ONCE YOU REALIZE THAT YOU'RE FANTASIZING, THE REALITY CREATED BY IT WILL DISSIPATE, AND EVERYTHING WILL RETURN TO THE WAY IT USED TO BE.
"THE CHOICE IS YOURS."
"THE THING BEYOND THIS DOOR WILL DECIDE THE FATE OF THE CITY.
"AND IT WILL DECIDE YOURS AS WELL."
I'M JUST A FIG-MENT OF YOUR FAN-TASY.
HIRUKO IS AN INVENTION OF AZUSA'S IMAGINATION?
!
ARE YOU ASKING ME TO CHOOSE BETWEEN HIRUKO AND AZUSA?
I AM THE ONE WHO MUST CHOOSE
MIZUKI, I REALIZED ...
...WHAT EMOTION I FELT FOR YOU.
YOUR IDEAL DREAM IS TO HAVE AZUSA BACK, ISN'T IT?
I WON'T STAND IN THE WAY.


CREAK...
CREAK...
IT'S THE LEAST I CAN DO...
I'LL DO IT.
I CAN'T LET YOU DO SUCH A HORRIBLE THING.
THAT'S NOT YOUR CHOICE TO MAKE!
THIS CAN'T BE EASY FOR YOU!
I'M THE ONE WHO GETS TO CHOOSE.
WAIT!
...ISN'T ME!
I'M OPENING THE DOOR.
THE PERSON MIZUKI REALLY WANTS TO COMFORT HER!...
YOU'RE JUST AS COLD AS THE LAST BAKU!"
WHEN AZUSA IMAGINED "CHITOSE," DETAILS LIKE HIS TRUE PERSONALITY WERE MISSING.
SO THE MISSING PORTIONS WERE REPLACED BY AZUSA.
THE FEELINGS I HAD FOR YOU, MIZUKI, WERE AS MY YOUNGER SISTER.
I DON'T MIND IF I LOSE EVERYTHING FOR YOUR SAKE.
I'LL MAKE YOUR DREAM COME TRUE.
IF YOU CAN'T DO IT YOURSELF, I'LL DO IT FOR YOU.


CHITOSE ...
AH...
TWO YEARS AGO...
THIS IS...
AH...
... THE TRUTH ...


AAGHHH

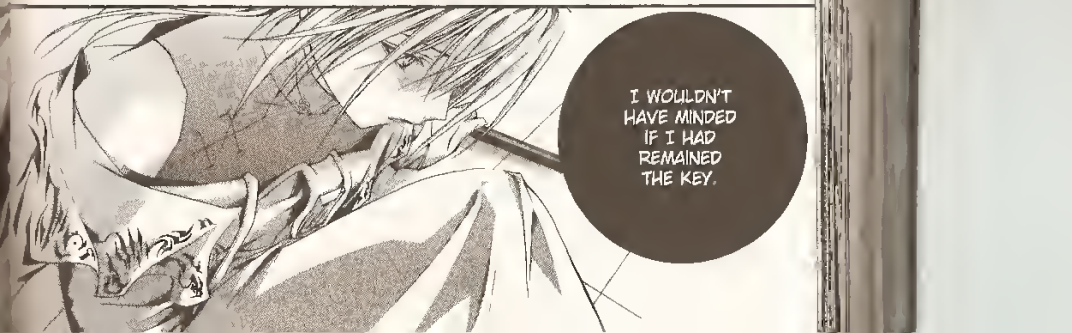
I PURSUED SELF-DESTRUCTION BECAUSE I DESPISED BEING HUMAN AND THE EMPTINESS OF BEING A BAKU.

AND THIS IS WHAT RESULTED.

SQUEEZE

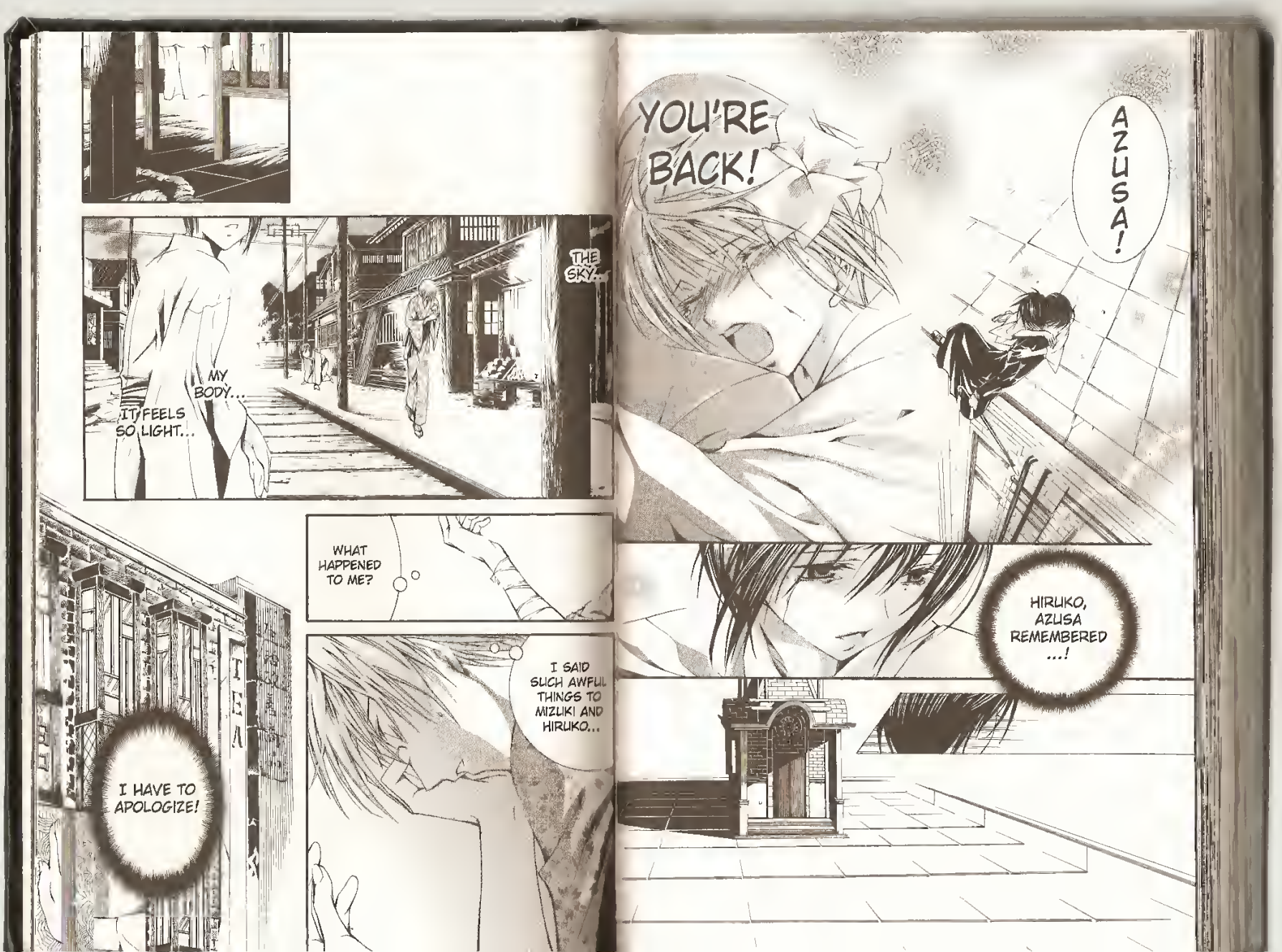
IN THE END, THERE'S NO PLACE FOR ME.

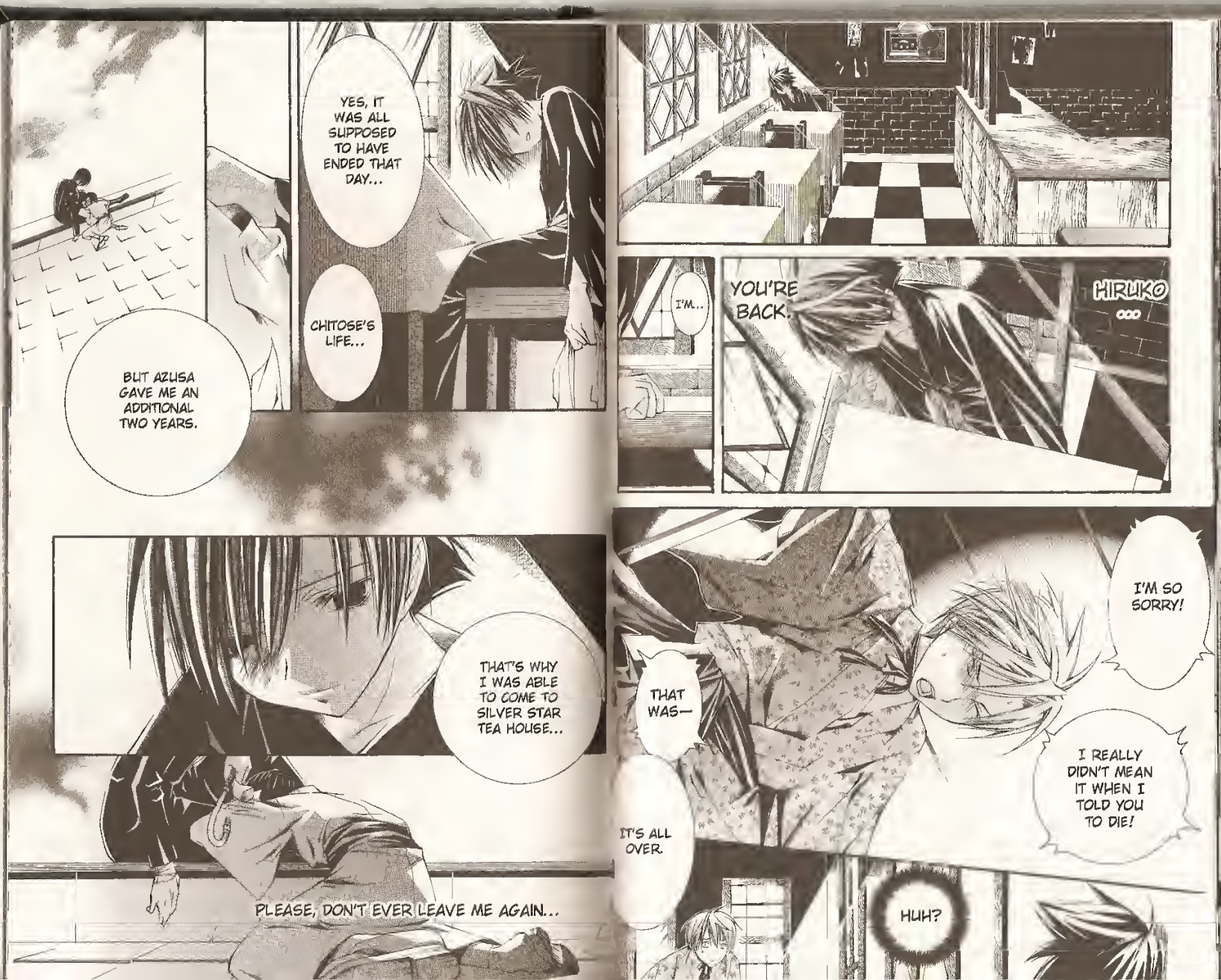
HE HAS BEEN BUILDING UP PRECIOUS MEMORIES, ONE BY ONE.
THE FANTASY THAT YOU'RE LOOKING DOWN ON DID IN FACT EXIST HERE.
AND BESIDES, TSUKI-SHIRO...
Oh yeah.
AND WHO WAS THE ONE WHO WAS SO ENTRANCED BY THE FANTASY THAT THEY FELL FOR IT?
THAT'S WHY...
EVEN IF I HAD, I WOULD HAVE THROWN THEM ALL AWAY TO BECOME A BAKU.
I DON'T HAVE. .
...ANY-THING LIKE THAT
PRE-CIOUS ..



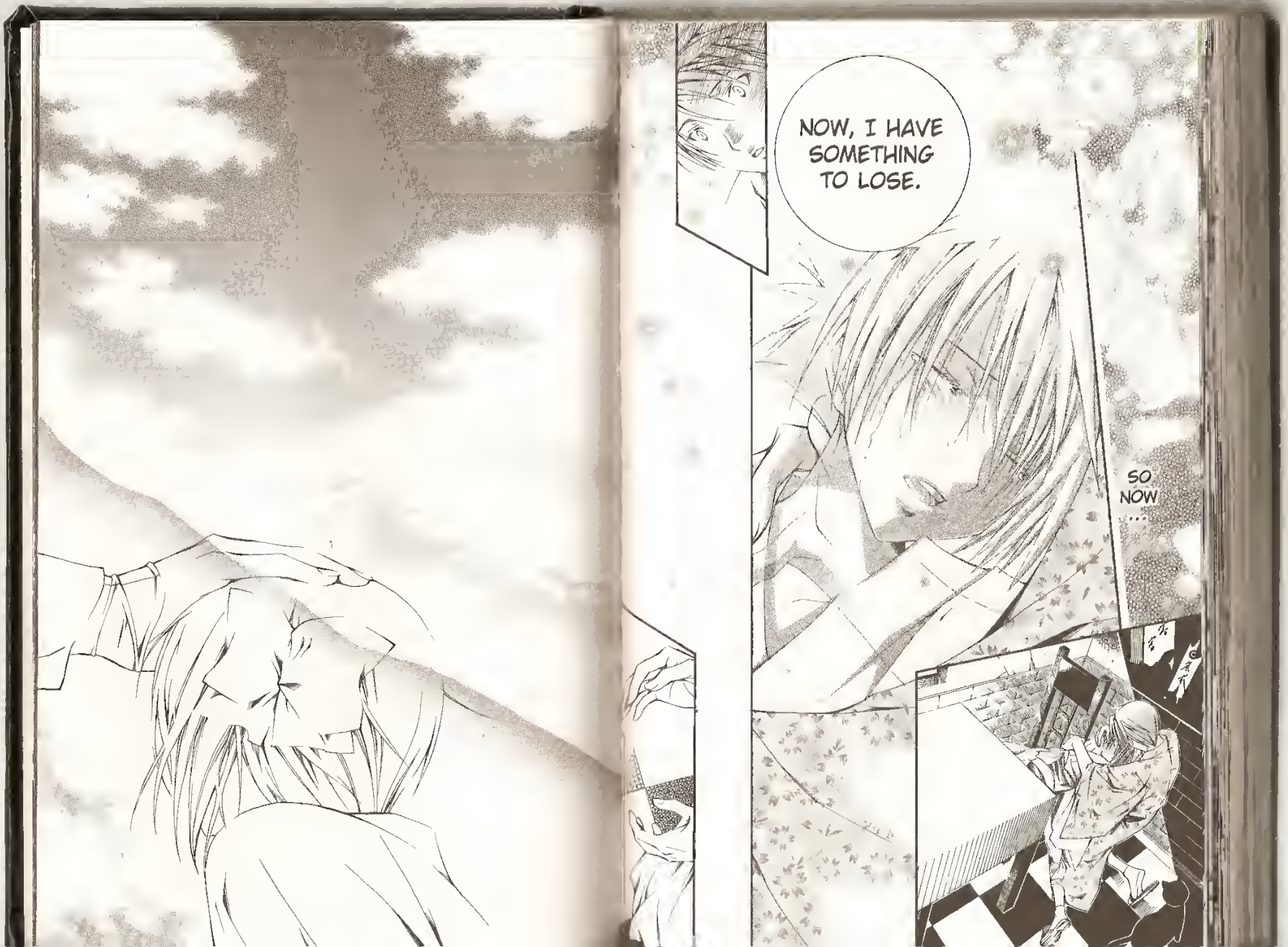
THIS LOOKS BETTER ON YOU MI...
THE PLACE WHERE I WAS WELCOME...
MI...
...KI...
MIZU..
...KI...
FINALLY...

THE SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE...
HAVING TROUBLE PUTTING IT IN YOUR HAIR?
THE PLACE WHERE I BELONG...


YOU'RE BACK!
AZUSA!
HIRUKO, AZUSA REMEMBERED ...!
THE SKY...
MY BODY...
IT FEELS SO LIGHT...
WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?
I SAID SUCH AWFUL THINGS TO MIZUKI AND HIRUKO...
I HAVE TO APOLOGIZE!
TEA


YES, IT WAS ALL SUPPOSED TO HAVE ENDED THAT DAY...
CHITOSE'S LIFE...
BUT AZUSA GAVE ME AN ADDITIONAL TWO YEARS.
I'M...
YOU'RE BACK.
HIRUKO ...
THAT'S WHY I WAS ABLE TO COME TO SILVER STAR TEA HOUSE...
PLEASE, DON'T EVER LEAVE ME AGAIN...
I'M SO SORRY!
THAT WAS—
I REALLY DIDN'T MEAN IT WHEN I TOLD YOU TO DIE!
IT'S ALL OVER.
HUH?

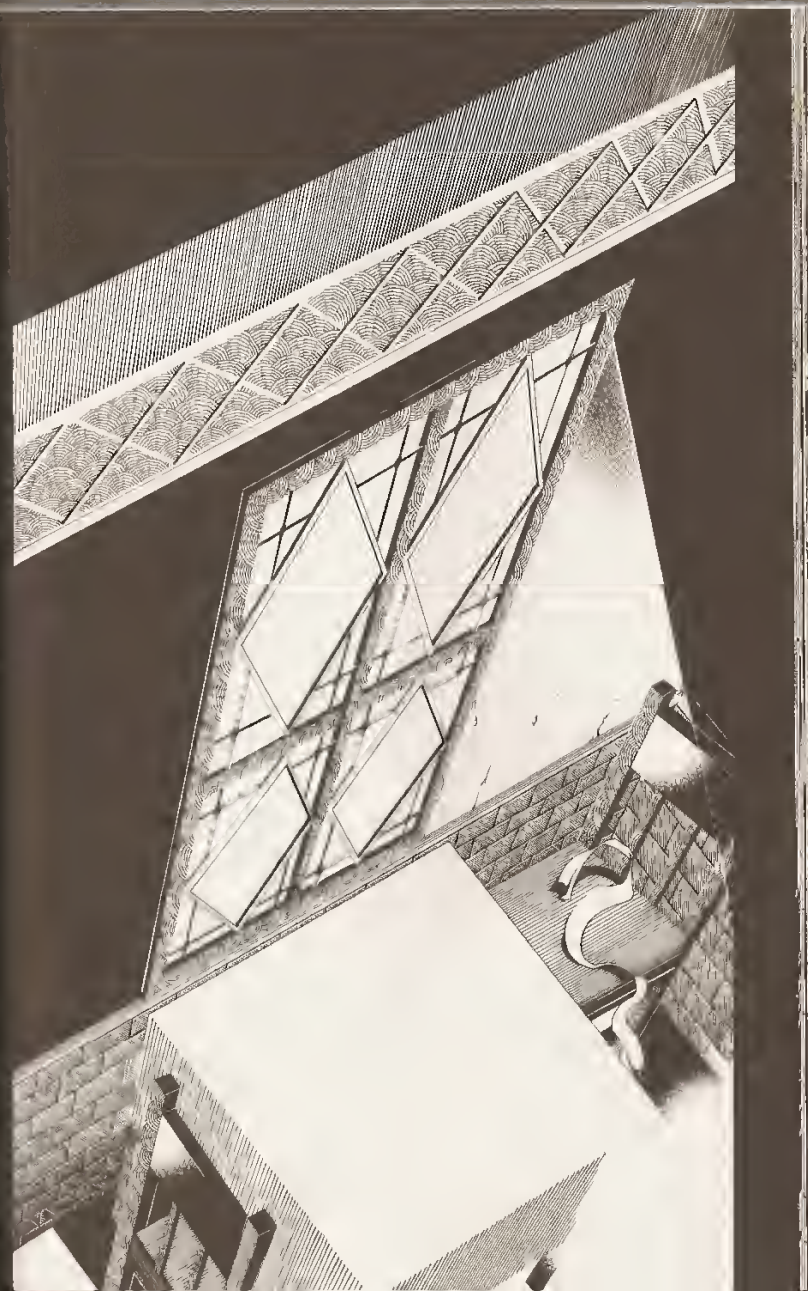
STRANGELY, I CHERISH THEM NOW...
THIS MOMENT THAT I HAD WAITED SO LONG FOR...
CHITOSE, FOR WHOM LIFE WAS SUPPOSED TO END WITHOUT A SINGLE HAPPINESS...
...WAS GIVEN SO MANY...
HIFUMI, YOU SHOWED ME SO MANY THINGS...
AND NOW, THOSE DREAMS YOU TOLD ME ABOUT THAT SEEMED SO SILLY AT THE TIME...
WHAT?! HIRUKO?!
HIS BODY ...!
MIZUKI GAVE ME THE VIEW FROM THIS CHAIR..
THE THINGS THAT HIRUKO GAVE ME...


NOW, I HAVE SOMETHING TO LOSE.
SO NOW...

UNDER COVER
OF DARKNESS..

THEY CAME TO
THE SILVER STAR
TEA HOUSE..

...SEEKING SOLACE.



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|---|---|
| Wanwan Shiroi | ◇In charge of inking blacks and screen tones |
| Neema | ◇In charge of backgrounds and shadow tones |
| Katsumi Arai | ◇In charge of frames |
| MOAI | ◇Moral support |

Everyone that was involved with making this book
<Everyone at Square Enix>

All of our readers...

感謝

THANK YOU!

## SHIN MASHIBA

Thank you, everyone, for all your support!

Shin Mashiba's first manga, *Yumekui Kenbun* (Nightmare Inspector), premiered in *Monthly Stencil*, a shojo magazine, in December 2001 and was then serialized in *Monthly G Fantasy* from 2003 to 2007. Mashiba-san's own nightmares include being forced to eat 50 living slugs and being chased by time.

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Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by VIZ Media, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

VIZ Media Edition
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, August 2009



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